



A University of Sussex DPhil thesis

Available online via Sussex Research Online:

<http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/>

This thesis is protected by copyright which belongs to the author.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the Author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the Author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Please visit Sussex Research Online for more information and further details

Civil society roles in transition: towards sustainable food?

Rachael Amy Durrant

*A thesis submitted in May 2014 in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy*

SPRU - Science and Technology Policy Research

University of Sussex

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been, and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:

University of Sussex

Rachael Durrant, DPhil in Science, Technology and Innovation Studies

Civil society roles in transition: towards sustainable food?

Summary

Civil society organisations (CSOs) in the UK are currently engaged in attempts to make food systems more sustainable, i.e. greener, fairer and healthier. These efforts have been maintained over several decades, for instance the Soil Association was launched in response to concerns about modern agriculture and food in 1946. But more sustainable food systems remain marginal. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to improve understanding of the important roles that CSOs can and do play within processes of large-scale social change (or ‘transitions’). It does this by developing a typology of the distinguishable roles played by CSOs in transition, and relating this to empirical findings from three UK case studies. Through a mixture of field observations, documentary analysis and in-depth interviewing, it makes a number of relevant findings. First, it provides detailed empirical characterisation of the activities, relationships with other actors, and stated intentions of specific CSOs. Second, it finds that CSOs chart unique transformative pathways, both individually and collectively, which emerge from their interactions and strategic repositioning over time. Third, rather than being guided by a single shared vision of transition, CSOs are found to be engaged in a plurality of intended transformations that contend with, cross-cut and partially encompass each other.

These findings contribute to scholarly knowledge about how civil society innovation operates at different structural levels, targets different elements within socio-technical systems, and engages different kinds of actors and practices. They also reinforce and extend existing understandings of how civil society actors exercise power in the context of transitions, and reveal how systemic perspectives – such as underlie transitions theory – can obfuscate both the intentions and activities of the actors involved, thereby raising questions about the attribution of agency in studies of transition.

Table of Contents (brief)

Summary	iii
Table of Contents (brief)	iv
Table of Contents (extended)	v
List of figures	xii
List of tables	xv
Acknowledgements	xx
PART I: Inputs	1
CHAPTER 1. Introduction	2
CHAPTER 2. Food, sustainability and civil society in the UK	18
CHAPTER 3. Conceptual underpinnings	35
CHAPTER 4. Theoretical framework	64
CHAPTER 5. Methodology	98
CHAPTER 6. Introduction to the cases	119
PART II: Outputs	138
CHAPTER 7. Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch	139
CHAPTER 8. The Fife Diet	174
CHAPTER 9. The Soil Association	210
CHAPTER 10. Discussion	266
CHAPTER 11. Conclusion	305
References	319
Appendices	334

Table of Contents (extended)

Summary	iii
Table of Contents (brief)	iv
Table of Contents (extended)	v
List of figures	xii
List of tables	xv
Acknowledgements	xx
PART I: Inputs	1
CHAPTER 1. Introduction	2
1.1 Contexts	3
1.1.1 Global context	3
1.1.2 Conceptual context	5
1.1.3 Empirical context	7
1.2 Theorisation	11
1.2.1 Perspectives from Science, Technology and Innovation Studies	11
1.2.2 My thesis	14
1.2.3 Outline	17
CHAPTER 2. Food, sustainability and civil society in the UK	18
2.1 Policy and market developments	18
2.1.1 The United Kingdom	19
2.1.2 Scotland	26
2.1.3 Local and metropolitan authorities	27
2.2 Developments in civil society	28
2.2.1 Civic involvement	29
2.2.2 Social movements	31

2.2.3 Consumer demand	32
2.3 Summary	33
CHAPTER 3. Conceptual underpinnings	35
3.1 Change towards sustainability	35
3.2 Civil society.....	41
3.2.1 Summary	52
3.3 Food systems.....	54
3.4 Conclusions.....	61
CHAPTER 4. Theoretical framework	64
4.1 Niche-oriented roles.....	66
4.1.1 Grassroots Innovations	66
4.1.2 Niche development	70
4.2 Regime-oriented roles.....	74
4.2.1 Normative contestation	74
4.2.2 Reform and re-orientation	78
4.3 Discussion.....	83
4.4 Conclusions.....	94
CHAPTER 5. Methodology	98
5.1 Research design.....	99
5.1.1 Defining and selecting cases	101
5.1.2 Data collection.....	105
5.2 Analysis and interpretation	108
5.2.1 Phase one: opening up the cases.....	109
5.2.2 Phase two: analysing the cases using closed codes.....	111
5.2.3 Phase three: interpreting the cases.....	112

5.3 Conclusions.....	114
CHAPTER 6. Introduction to the cases	119
6.1 Case I: Tablehurst & Plaw Hatch	119
6.1.1 The geography and cultural milieu of Tablehurst & Plaw Hatch	120
6.1.2 The linked organisations	122
6.1.2.1 The Biodynamic Agricultural College	123
6.1.2.2 The Biodynamic Agricultural Association	123
6.1.2.3 The Biodynamic Land Trust.....	124
6.1.2.4 Transition Forest Row.....	124
6.1.2.5 The Soil Association.....	125
6.2 Case II: The Fife Diet.....	125
6.2.1 The geography and cultural milieu of the Fife Diet	125
6.2.2 The linked organisations	127
6.2.2.1 Moffat-CAN	128
6.2.2.2 Greener Kirkcaldy.....	128
6.2.2.3 Nourish Scotland.....	128
6.2.2.4 Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming.....	129
6.2.2.5 WWF-UK.....	130
6.3 Case III: The Soil Association	130
6.3.1 The geography and cultural milieu of the Soil Association.....	131
6.3.2 The linked organisations	132
6.3.2.1 Unicorn Grocery.....	133
6.3.2.2 Growing Communities.....	133
6.3.2.3 Garden Organic.....	134
6.3.2.4 Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming.....	135
6.3.2.5 The Food Ethics Council.....	135
6.3.2.6 Compassion in World Farming	135
6.3.2.7 The Marine Stewardship Council	136

PART II: Outputs	138
CHAPTER 7. Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch	139
7.1 Activities	139
7.1.1 Tablehurst & Plaw Hatch.....	140
7.1.1.1 Grassroots innovation	140
7.1.1.2 Niche development.....	149
7.1.1.3 Normative contestation.....	152
7.1.1.4 Summary.....	153
7.1.2 The linked organisations	154
7.2 Relationships	155
7.2.1 Substantial relations.....	156
7.2.1.1 The Biodynamic Agricultural College	156
7.2.1.2 The Biodynamic Agricultural Association	156
7.2.1.3 The Biodynamic Land Trust.....	157
7.2.1.4 Transition Forest Row.....	158
7.2.1.5 The Soil Association.....	159
7.2.2 Formal relations	161
7.3 Intentions	163
7.3.1 Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch	163
7.3.2 The linked organisations	166
CHAPTER 8. The Fife Diet	174
8.1 Activities	174
8.1.1 The Fife Diet.....	174
8.1.1.1 Grassroots innovation	174
8.1.1.2 Niche development.....	180
8.1.1.3 Normative contestation.....	183
8.1.1.4 Regime reform.....	188
8.1.1.5 Summary.....	188

8.1.2 The linked organisations	189
8.2 Relationships	190
8.2.1 The organisations in the network	190
8.2.1.1 Moffat-CAN	190
8.2.1.2 Greener Kirkcaldy.....	191
8.2.1.3 Nourish Scotland.....	191
8.2.1.4 Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming.....	193
8.2.1.5 WWF-UK.....	194
8.2.2 Formal relations	195
8.3 Intentions	197
8.3.1 The Fife Diet	197
8.3.2 The linked organisations	201
CHAPTER 9. The Soil Association.....	210
9.1 Activities	210
9.1.1 The Soil Association.....	210
9.1.1.1 Grassroots innovation	210
9.1.1.2 Niche development.....	211
9.1.1.3 Normative contestation.....	218
9.1.1.4 Regime reform.....	226
9.1.1.5 Summary.....	236
9.1.2 The linked organisations	238
9.2 Relationships	239
9.2.1 Substantial relations.....	239
9.2.1.1 Unicorn Grocery.....	239
9.2.1.2 Growing Communities.....	240
9.2.1.3 Garden Organic.....	241
9.2.1.4 Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming.....	242
9.2.1.5 The Food Ethics Council.....	245

9.2.1.6	Compassion in World Farming	246
9.2.1.7	The Marine Stewardship Council	247
9.2.2	Formal relations	249
9.3	Intentions	250
9.3.1	The Soil Association.....	251
9.3.2	The linked organisations	254
CHAPTER 10.	Discussion.....	266
10.1	Distinguishable roles: a systems view.....	268
10.1.1	Grassroots innovation	268
10.1.2	Niche development	270
10.1.3	Normative contestation	272
10.1.4	Regime reform	273
10.1.5	Summary	275
10.2	Enacting the roles: an actor level view	277
10.2.1	Multivalency	278
10.2.2	Relational complexity.....	281
10.2.3	Dynamism.....	287
10.2.4	Summary	295
10.3	Stated intentions: actors' own views	296
10.4	Conclusions.....	300
CHAPTER 11.	Conclusion	305
11.1	Research questions	305
11.2	Contributions.....	307
11.2.1	Theory	307
11.2.2	Policy and practice	311

11.3 Limitations and further research	315
References.....	319
Appendices	334
Appendix A	334
Appendix B	335
Appendix C	336

List of figures

Figure 1. Typology of civil society roles in transition, diagram adapted from Geels (2002)	16
Figure 2. Some of the different forms that civic involvement in food systems has taken in the UK.	30
Figure 3. The multi-level perspective on transitions (Geels 2004a)	37
Figure 4. The Triple Embeddedness Framework (TEF) (Geels 2014)	39
Figure 5. The three sector model (after Paton, 2009)	43
Figure 6. Civil society activity in sustainable electricity transitions, Smith (2012)	66
Figure 7. Relationships between local projects and the global level in niche development (Geels and Raven 2006).....	72
Figure 8. Typology of civil society roles in transition, diagram adapted from Geels (2002)	85
Figure 9. Relationships between knowledge and power, adapted from Avelino and Rotmans (2009)	87
Figure 10. Typology of power exercise (based on Avelino and Rotmans, 2009)	88
Figure 11. Positive reinforcements between the four roles in transition.	97
Figure 12. Theoretical basis for selection of focal organisations for the three cases	103
Figure 13. Map showing the location of the two farms and the village of Forest Row.....	121
Figure 14. Network diagram showing the nine individuals interviewed in connection with this case (they are all given code names). The diagram also shows relationships between T&PH and numerous other CSOs, which were discovered through interviewing individuals from T&PH.....	122
Figure 15. Map showing location of the Fife Diet within the county of Fife, Scotland	126
Figure 16. Network diagram showing the nine individuals interviewed in connection with this case (they are all given code names). The diagram also shows connections between the FD and numerous other CSOs, which were discovered through interviewing individuals from the FD.	127
Figure 17. Network diagram showing the fifteen individuals interviewed in connection with this case (they are all given code names). The diagram also shows connections	

between the SA and numerous other CSOs, which were discovered through interviewing individuals from the SA.	132
Figure 18. Social worlds/arenas map showing the collective commitments of and relationships between T&PH and the organisations in its network	162
Figure 19. 'Map' of the roles currently played by T&PH in transitions (text within shaded area), and the shifting positions adopted by the organisation over time, with respect to these roles (shaded arrows). Diagram adapted from Geels (2002).....	169
Figure 20. 'Map' of the roles currently played in transitions by T&PH (shaded area with solid outline) and five other CSOs that it works in association with (shaded areas with broken outlines). Diagram adapted from Geels (2002).	171
Figure 21. Social worlds/arenas map showing the collective commitments of and relationships between the FD and the organisations in its network.	196
Figure 22. 'Map' of the roles currently played by the FD in transitions (text within shaded area), and the shifting positions adopted by the organisation over time, with respect to these roles (shaded arrows). Diagram adapted from Geels (2002).....	205
Figure 23. 'Map' of the roles currently played in transitions by the FD (shaded area with solid outline) and five other CSOs that it works in association with (shaded areas with broken outlines). Diagram adapted from Geels (2002).	207
Figure 24. Social worlds/arenas map showing the collective commitments of and relationships between the SA and the organisations in its network.	250
Figure 25. 'Map' of the roles currently played by the SA in transitions (text within shaded area), and the shifting positions adopted by the organisation over time, with respect to these roles (shaded arrows). Diagram adapted from Geels (2002).....	260
Figure 26. 'Map' of the roles currently played in transitions by the SA (shaded area with solid outline) and five other CSOs that it works in association with (shaded areas with broken outlines). Diagram adapted from Geels (2002).	263
Figure 27. Civil society roles in transition as performed by UK-based CSOs in their attempts to drive change towards sustainability in food systems.....	275

Figure 28. Schematic maps of the roles currently played in transitions by T&PH, the FD, the SA and the other CSOs in their networks – highlighting ‘hotspots’. Diagrams adapted from Geels (2002).	282
Figure 29. Social worlds/arenas map showing the collective commitments of and relationships between the 18 organisations in my study.	287
Figure 30. Schematic maps of the three case organisations highlighting the shifts in emphasis between the roles they have enacted over time. Solid black arrows represent past shifts and grey arrows represent ongoing or planned shifts. Numbered positions indicate the time sequence of shifts.....	288
Figure 31. Potential links between the internal management structures of CSOs working at different scales of operations, on the one hand, and the roles that they play in transition, on the other; as highlighted by the cases of T&PH, TFR, the FD, the SA and Sustain.	295
Figure 32. Showing the frequency with which principal themes from my analysis – of the properties that individual people involved in my three cases associate with sustainable food systems – occurred, from a total of 67 stated properties.....	298
Figure 33. Showing the frequency with which principle themes from my analysis – of the most likely drivers of change towards sustainability in food systems cited by individual people involved in my three cases – occurred, from a total of 37 stated drivers	299

List of tables

Table 1. Summary of relevant policy, market and civil society developments (1939-present)	34
Table 2. Characteristics of AFNs, with examples to illustrate consequences for integrity/empowerment	60
Table 3. Summary of statements about civil society and CSOs, indicating their sources	63
Table 4. Market-based and grassroots innovations compared, adapted from Seyfang and Smith (2007: 592)	68
Table 5. A typology of civil society actors' 'roles in transition' cf. 'mode of power exercise'	89
Table 6. Data overview.....	106
Table 7. Longevity, size, geography and structure of all CSOs in the study (subset of criteria used for case selection). No shading indicates organisation in case I; pale shading, case II; dark shading, case III; diagonal lines, multiple case association. Ordering reflects size of incoming resources, from lowest at the top to highest at the bottom.	116
Table 8. Theoretical codes used in the analysis.....	117
Table 9. Synergies and tensions between T&PH and the organisations in its network	161
Table 10. Activities carried out by the organisations under the headings of the four roles in transition.	170
Table 11. Stated intentions of the six organisations and related views held by some of their members	172
Table 12. Synergies and tensions between the FD and the organisations in its network. .	195
Table 13. Activities carried out by the organisations under the headings of the four roles in transition.	206
Table 14. Intended impacts of the six organisations and related views held by some of their members.....	208
Table 15. Synergies and tensions between the SA and the organisations in its network ..	248

Table 16. Comparing (1) the sites and specifics of embedding the SA's Organic production standards and FFL catering mark within regime contexts, and (2) the negotiations involved	258
Table 17. Activities carried out by the CSOs in the SA's network, under the headings of the four roles in transition.....	261
Table 18. Intended impacts of the six organisations and related views held by some of their members	264
Table 19. Grassroots innovation: Elements, i.e. what is being practised? Activities, i.e. how is it being practised? Actors, i.e. who is practising it?	269
Table 20. Niche development: Elements, i.e. what is being developed? Activities, i.e. how is it being developed? Actors, i.e. who is it developed for (users/beneficiaries)?	271
Table 21. Normative contestation: Elements, i.e. what is being contested? Activities, i.e. how is it being contested? Actors, i.e. targeting whom?	273
Table 22. Regime reform: Elements, i.e. what is being reformed? Activities, i.e. how is it being reformed? Actors, i.e. who is affected by the reforms?	274
Table 23. Improved understanding of civil society roles in transition.....	277
Table 24. Different kinds of resources that the three case organisations exchange with the other organisations in their networks; 'gains' are recorded first, with a solid black left-pointing arrow; 'gives' are recorded second, with a white right-pointing arrow.	285
Table 25. Dimensions of tents and palaces (Anheier 2000), with examples from my study.	292
Table 26. The principal kinds of activities, relationships with other CSOs and state and market actors, and styles of governance and management that characterise the four roles in the RIT framework.....	302
Table 27. Summary of relevant historical developments food markets, policy and civil society (from chapter two) tracked against historical developments in the three case organisations, from the 1920s to the present	303
Table 28. "Effective strategies for achieving change..."	313
Table 29. "Appropriate forms of support for CSOs..."	315

List of abbreviations

CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CCF	Climate Challenge Fund
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
Defra	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EU	European Union
FEC	Food Ethics Council
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
OBG	Organic Buying Group
SLRG	Sustainable Lifestyles Research Group
UK	United Kingdom
RIT	Roles in transition
BSE	Bovine spongiform encephalopathy
FSA	Food Standards Agency
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food
GM	Genetic modification
GHG	Greenhouse gas
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
LA	Local Authority
US	United States of America
IGD	Institute of Grocery Distribution
MLP	Multi-Level Perspective
TEF	Triple-Embeddedness Framework
ICNPO	International Classification of Non-Profit Organisations
NCVO	National Council for Voluntary Organisations
TSRC	Third Sector Research Centre
TSO	Third Sector Organisation

AFN	Alternative Food Network
CFN	Civic Food Network
SNM	Strategic Niche Management
SM	Social Movement
TPM	Technology- and Product-oriented Movement
T&PH	Tablehurst & Plaw Hatch Community Farm
BDAC	Biodynamic Agricultural College
BDLT	Biodynamic Land Trust
BDA	Biodynamic Agricultural Association
TFR	Transition Forest Row
SA	Soil Association
IPS	Industrial and Provident Society
CBS	Community Benefit Society
FD	Fife Diet
GK	Greener Kirkcaldy
M-CAN	Moffat-CAN
NS	Nourish Scotland
Sustain	Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming
WWF-UK	World Wide Fund for Nature UK, known as WWF-UK
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CIC	Community Interest Company
MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament
SA-CERT	Soil Association Certification Limited
FFLP	Food for Life Partnership
Unicorn	Unicorn Grocery
Grow Com	Growing Communities
GO	Garden Organic
FEC	Food Ethics Council
CIWF	Compassion in World Farming

MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ASC	Aquaculture Stewardship Council
SAS	Soil Association Scotland
NIMB	Not In My Banger
FFL	Food for Life
MCS	Marine Conservation Society
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
FLO	Fairtrade International
LEAF	Linking Environment and Farming
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
LEA	Local Education Authority
UKAS	United Kingdom Accreditation Service
GBS	Government Buying Standards
VSSN	Voluntary Sector Studies Network

Acknowledgements

Without funding from Defra, the ESRC and the Scottish Government none of this would have been possible. Equally, without the generosity of the individuals that volunteered their time to be interviewed as part of this project, I would have nothing to report.

Further, if it wasn't for the vision of my two supervisors Adrian Smith and Andy Stirling, who conceived the topic of this thesis and recruited me to it, I wouldn't be writing these words. Throughout my PhD study they have been a great source of critical and constructive feedback, wisdom and care. Thanks Adrian and Andy!

Thanks are also due to several other academics at SPRU and 'abroad', principal amongst which is Sabine Hielscher, who has been an inspirational conversant, a mentor, and a very good friend to me. Also at SPRU I would like to thank Rebecca White, Tammy Sharp, Kathi Welle, Ruth Segal and Jake Barnes, for a mix of scholarly exchange, collegial support and friendship. Additionally, I would like to thank colleagues at UEA, including Jeppe Graugaard (especially), Gill Seyfang, Tom Hargreaves and Noel Longhurst, for providing me with an academic home-from-home, challenging my thinking and giving me confidence in my work. Thanks also to Ian Christie, Tim Jackson and others involved in the SLRG for providing such a stimulating context in which to develop my research.

But most of all I would like to thank my family, especially my mum, Jane Durrant, and my partner, Luke Murray for their ceaseless support in numerous very tangible ways (such as transcribing several of my interviews, proofreading the final chapters and helping me with document preparation); and not forgetting my wonderful sister, Emily Durrant, for her unwavering belief in my abilities which has sustained me through many tough times; and my Grandpa, Richard Scarr, for giving me much more than a roof over my head and hot meals. I would also like to thank my 'in-laws', Jim and Liz Murray, for nursing me through sickness, taxi-ing me around, and feeding me so well; and my two brothers, who I am so happy to have reconnected with in these last few years.

And finally, thanks also to my wonderful friends whose care and affection has been the buoyant water through which I have swum this marathon. Thanks especially to Isobel Anderson, Jen Rouse, Vic Markham, Hari Buxton, Jack Feintuck, Josh Routh, Darren and Lizzie Hougham and Laura Sommer.

PART I: Inputs

CHAPTER 1. Introduction

This thesis is part of a wider portfolio of studies under the umbrella of the Sustainable Lifestyles Research Group (SLRG), a multi-institution research centre jointly funded by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Scottish Government. The broad aims of the SLRG are to, “develop new and relevant understandings of the processes which lead to changes in people’s lifestyles, behaviours and practices; and to offer evidence-based advice to policy-makers about realistic strategies to encourage more sustainable lifestyles” (Sustainable Lifestyles Research Group 2012). It is within this frame of reference that the thesis was originally conceived. Moreover, in the interests of the funders, the study has been designed with two further criteria in mind: (1) a focus on food and agriculture; and, (2) strong relevance to the UK policy context. In the original proposal for funding, it was envisaged that one of the unique offerings of the thesis to the SLRG portfolio would include the use of theoretical frameworks that would highlight processes of *innovation* and the influence of *institutions* – both in the sense of important organisations and established practices – in enabling and constraining change towards sustainability. The other unique offering would be a focus on organised groups within civil society, as opposed to state or market actors.

Hence, this is a study of UK-based civil society organisations (CSOs), which is primarily concerned with the roles that they play in transitions towards the sustainability of food systems within the UK. The core research questions addressed in this study are as follows:

1. What are the distinguishable kinds of roles that civil society actors play in their attempts to drive change towards sustainability in food systems?
2. How do the strategic activities of individual civil society organisations (CSOs), parts of CSOs, and associations of multiple CSOs relate to these roles, concurrently and over time?
3. How do these roles relate to the stated intentions of key-actors within CSOs?

These questions will be explained in more detail in the following chapters (they are properly introduced in 4.3). In this introductory chapter, however, I will aim to position the study within the broad debates that led to its inception. I will outline my own opinions, and also doubts, arising from these debates in so far as they have conditioned the framing and subsequent development of the study. I will identify the empirical phenomena that will form the foreground of the enquiry, situating them within these broad debates. And finally, I will explain why this study merits the attention of both academics and policymakers alike.

1.1 Contexts

1.1.1 Global context

This study takes certain things as ‘read’. This does not mean that they are uncontested and self-evident ‘truths’, but that they are assumed, for the purpose of analysis, to be important parts of the conceptual ‘landscape’. To begin with, food is fundamental – as human beings, we all need to eat. And yet it is clear that current patterns of food consumption and production are unsustainable at a global level, leaving many of us vulnerable to grave environmental and social risks (Bruntland 1987, Ehrlich 1995, Schenker and Kirkhorn 2001, Beddington 2009, Cotula, Vermeulen et al. 2009, Garnett 2009, Nelson, Rosegrant et al. 2009, Kearney 2010, Satterthwaite, McGranahan et al. 2010, Smith, Gregory et al. 2010). So, various people are calling for change towards sustainability (see section 1.1.2 below for a discussion of how sustainability is understood within the study), including academics, citizens, businesses, civil society groups, governments and international institutions (Friedmann 1993, Lang and Heasman 2004, Tischner, Stø et al. 2010). Indeed, many attempts to drive change have been made by these same groups of actors over long periods of time (the Soil Association, for instance, was launched in response to concerns about modern agriculture and food in 1946). But despite these attempts, the academics and international institutions that are monitoring environmental and social indicators of sustainability report that the situation is worsening at a global level (Parry 2007, Garnett 2008).

Thus, a central – and indeed very broad – question arises: ‘why is this?’ Why is it proving so difficult to institute alternative, more sustainable food systems and practices? One answer to this is that food is produced and consumed by way of complex socio-technological-ecological systems which can never be fully understood, due to the impossibility of eradicating the considerable uncertainties that characterise them (Thompson and Scoones 2009, Bows, Dawkins et al. 2012). However, there are many other interlinked facets of this problem. For instance, much of the food that is consumed in the UK comes from globalised systems of supply, although the degree to which food systems are globalised is highly variable (AMEC Environment & Infrastructure UK Limited 2012). Likewise, policies that influence patterns of consumption and production are set and implemented at different levels, ranging from the local to the global, moving food systems beyond the ability of any single actor, or level of government, to control. Furthermore, mutually reinforcing configurations of food-related technologies, policies, institutions, industrial standards, social norms and expectations (or ‘food regimes’) have stabilised over time to produce the food systems that we have currently, and they are resistive to change (Atkins and Bowler 2001). Adding to the complexity, different kinds of actors bring divergent perspectives to debates and their attempts to drive change are framed by different sets of assumptions (Stirling Forthcoming).

Hence, the attempts made by these different actors to drive change at a global level have been met by significant barriers involving things that no-one understands, things that are understood but uncertain, things that key stakeholders disagree about, and things that are intractable to the attempts made by even very powerful actors to control them. So although I will be focussing in this study on pockets of promising practice arising from civil society, it is with an acute awareness of the scale of the challenge and the uncertainties that face the actors involved. Thus, I am not expecting to uncover a solution to these problems, *per se*, but will be pursuing more modest (analytical) aims.

1.1.2 Conceptual context

It's worth saying now that, in this study, I understand 'sustainability' to be constituted by 'the Brundtland triad' of environmental integrity, social equity and personal wellbeing (Stirling Forthcoming). Nonetheless, I acknowledge that how this manifests in practice will inevitably vary from place to place and time to time, looking and feeling different depending on the framing assumptions that underpin each instance when something – or someone – is conceived of as such, i.e. as either 'sustainable', or 'unsustainable', or even as somewhat, or partly or 'under some views', sustainable¹. In fact, some people prefer to think of sustainability as a journey, or process through which principles and practices are explored and adapted, rather than as a destination or outcome in itself (Koc 2010). So, as a complement to the above definition, sustainability is also understood within the context of this study as something that is striven for, but may or may not ever be finally and permanently realised. The same applies in reverse. I might diagnose 'unsustainability' as a characteristic of a specified set of relationships and processes, to the best of my knowledge, and as a contingent state of affairs. However, I cannot say with certainty that one process or pathway of change will lead to an unsustainable outcome, whereas another will lead to a sustainable one.

What I can say is this: that *to seek change towards **sustainability** implies striving for environmental integrity, social equity and personal wellbeing*. So this study is not concerned with evaluating the extent to which sustainability is achieved, but with the extent to which it is striven for, and how this striving is done. Thus, under this view the motivations, objectives and framings of different actors become important, and sustainability is understood as a boundary term around which all the subjects studied operate.

¹ Michael Jacobs calls Sustainable Development, from which the concept of sustainability derives, an 'essentially contested concept' for this reason. See Jacobs, M. (1999). *Sustainable Development as a Contested Concept. Fairness and Futurity: Essays on Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice*. A. Dobson. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

It is also worth noting how food systems are understood within the study. Food production and consumption are characterised by a wide array of different interconnected processes, covering the growing, processing, trade, distribution and storage, retailing, cooking, eating, sharing, discussing, disposal and governance of food. These processes operate in every cultural and political context, across space and over time, without fixed boundaries (Lang and Heasman 2004). Systems of food production and consumption could therefore be represented in a multitude of possible ways, prioritising some processes over others in the format of representation and, in doing so, elevating the demands of some actors over the demands of others. Hence, characterising a system for the purpose of study can be a subjective, and often political, act; particularly if the subjects (and audiences) of the research have much to lose or gain from it². Moreover, there is a general risk that the systematising and simplifying processes that form a key part of scholarly analysis may be reified and naturalised if the analytical framings adopted by the analyst are not subject to on-going re-consideration with respect to equally valid alternative views (Smith and Stirling 2010).

These issues will be dealt with in this study by treating food systems openly and reflexively, to allow for a plurality of interpretations; by taking care to ground each analysis in its empirical context; and by situating framings in relation to their subjects. In other words, *this study does not depend upon a single, ostensibly transcendent, notion of what constitutes a/the food system.*

The meaning of the phrase 'civil society' is hotly debated in contemporary literatures, from both academic and policy circles, and communities of practice. This plurality of divergent contemporary accounts is mirrored by the existence of multiple historical origins for the concept, each of which implies a different reading (Edwards 2009). Although it is conventionally understood in distinction to the concepts of 'state' and 'market', contemporary theorists take a range of more nuanced positions. (Walzer 1998:7). Hence, historian Michael Walzer argues that civil society is an essentially open

² In this case the study does have an explicit political dimension, in that it is intended to inform policymaking.

and unbounded space that frequently includes agents of state and market. For Waltzer, a key outcome of the associations and activities of civil society is to mediate between the ideals of political unity in the state and a-political plurality in the market, via the production of countless hybrid forms and associations.

Moreover, for scholar of Social Policy, Nicholas Deakin, the essence of civil society is *voluntary association*, which he says is unpredictable and diverse in both form and function (Deakin 2001:14). Similarly, Jonathan Garton – a scholar of civil society within the discipline of law – states that “the breadth of civil society organisations and their activities means that there is no paradigm CSO: there is no single purpose, form or mode of behaviour which captures the essence of the sector” (Garton 2009:23). Indeed, operational definitions of civil society tend to rely largely on polythetic classification. Hence, under this more practical view, the space of civil society is constituted by a collection of organisations that share some characteristics (but not necessarily all), out of a defined set. Key amongst these tends to be: ‘non-state’, ‘not-for-profit’ (or ‘non-market’), ‘voluntaristic’, and ‘for public benefit’ (Jas, Wilding et al. 2002).

So, in order to try and bridge these views somewhat, I have developed the following analytical definition, which I believe allows for a plurality of interpretations and therefore holds open a space for enquiry and debate:

Civil society is a distinguishable yet inherently open and changeable arena – defined in relation to state and market arenas and always intertwined with them in practice – in which people voluntarily form themselves into groups in order to connect around divergent notions of the public good.

With it in mind, I will now briefly introduce the empirical situation in the UK, though I will return to this in more depth within subsequent chapters.

1.1.3 Empirical context

Civil society organisations in the UK are currently engaged in attempts to make the food system more sustainable, i.e. greener (environmental integrity), fairer (social equity) and

healthier (personal wellbeing). In a recent survey of civil society action on food and farming in the UK, which was based on a sample of 322 organisations, the Food Ethics Council (2011) found a diverse mixture of different types of organisations working on a range of issues³. They included (*inter alia*) food businesses, research institutions, registered charities, community groups, food cooperatives, campaign groups, networks, commercial consultancies, social enterprises, wildlife trusts, think tanks, youth groups, school growing projects, professional associations and rare breed societies.

Despite this diversity, the Food Ethics Council (FEC) argues for calling these organisations a ‘sector’ within civil society, since there are many organisations working on issues that cut right across all the others. Key cross-cutting issues that organisations tended to work on alongside other themes included ‘sustainability’, ‘local food’ and ‘community’, (Food Ethics Council 2011:36). Moreover, the most commonly-cited overall objectives with respect to the food system concerned (in order of prominence): sustainable production and consumption; broader sustainability issues; radically fairer and more sustainable solutions; empowering communities; skills development across the food and farming system, and public health. In short, this pool of organisations within UK civil society, which – following the FEC – I will call a ‘food and farming sub-sector’, is simultaneously characterised by a diversity of practical responses to food issues, along with the prevalence of a few common concerns amongst which sustainability is paramount.

The Food Ethics Council report also provides a useful sense of the size and scope of the food and farming sector within civil society. Based on their findings, the authors estimate that between £300-700 million is spent per year on activities related to food and farming by somewhere in the region of 10-25,000 civil society organisations. Although this is a significant level of activity in and of itself, it is likely that it amounts to less than 1% of

³ I played a small part in carrying out this research with the Food Ethics Council. Specifically, I helped craft the survey questionnaire, inserting questions about the relationships between organisations, and I conducted a small number of follow-up interviews. I was also granted access to the results database.

overall expenditure from civil society⁴. Furthermore, the authors estimate that these groups employ around 20,000 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff and mobilise around 80,000 FTE volunteers. To put this in the context of wider food system economics, the total value of goods and services produced by the agri-food sector in 2009 was £89.1 billion (Holding, Carr et al. 2012:15) and the total spend on advertising for food products, soft drinks and chain restaurants in the press, radio, television, cinema and outdoor channels was £727 million in 2003 (Office of Communications 2004:123). On the other hand, central government spending on economic affairs related to “agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting” was £5.42 billion in 2011-12 tax year (Treasury 2012:52), whereas figures for government spending on food safety, food industry-related environmental protection, dietary health, trade in foodstuffs, and food aid and development projects, are harder to find. However, they are liable to be several orders of magnitude larger than the sum given above. So, by way of a crude calculation, the economic resources currently wielded by the food and farming sub-sector of UK civil society are miniscule compared to the combined resources of the food industry and government.

Furthermore, the report usefully summarises some of the strategic dynamics of the sector: “the approaches that civil society organisations take to addressing the issues that they work on vary considerably. Some focus on activities that make an immediate difference on the ground, such as community gardening or cookery classes. Some work to change the rules of the game, for example through campaigns or lobbying. Some co-ordinate and facilitate the activities of other groups” (Food Ethics Council 2011: 50). The report’s authors suggest that the question of whether it is possible to strike an ‘appropriate balance’ in the use of different strategies across the sector as a whole is a matter of debate. In the context of this debate, they point to familiar dualisms. For instance, the balance between “gradual versus radical changes, between service provision [within the frame of the status quo] and lobbying [challenging the status quo], and between insider and outsider strategies” (Food Ethics Council 2011: 50). Reflecting on

⁴ This estimate, also from the report, is derived by comparing the survey’s findings with research by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) that covers the whole civil society sector. Both studies use the same basic criteria to define civil society organisations that are used in this study.

what kind of balance is currently being struck, the authors write that, “the focus seems to be on filling holes left in a food system dominated by the private and public sectors, ahead of working to influence and change that system” (Food Ethics Council 2011: 89).

The report also sheds light on the ways in which food and farming CSOs perceive private companies, public sector organisations and other civil society organisations working within the food system. Overall, the survey respondents felt that their most mutually beneficial relationships are with other CSOs (amongst others, they named NGOs, community groups, Sustain, the Soil Association, voluntary organisations and the grassroots), whereas their greatest antagonists are state and market actors (naming, amongst others, Government, agribusiness, supermarkets, food corporations and biotech companies). However, the majority of organisations that took part in the survey were strongly interventionist in how they view the proper role of the state, calling for strong policies on public procurement of food and food planning, whilst at the same time believing that ‘big business must be part of the solution’.

So, in summary, sustainability is a prime concern for the majority of CSOs in the UK whose work is focussed on food and farming. Moreover, these groups are responding to their concerns around the sustainability of food systems with a considerable variety of approaches. They take on an array of different organisational and legal forms, and they engage a range of different strategies for driving change, whether aimed at immediate and on-the-ground effects, or at more systemic changes. However, the resources that they yield are strongly limited in comparison with the resources of the food industry and the food and farming-related spend from Government. Nonetheless, they are ambivalent in their perceptions of incumbent state and market actors, at once viewing them as hindrances to the resolution of current food and farming issues, but insisting that they should play prominent roles in attempts to drive change.

1.2 Theorisation

1.2.1 Perspectives from Science, Technology and Innovation Studies

It is proposed by some academics in the tradition of Science, Technology and Innovation Studies that the current crisis of unsustainability – which affects not just food systems, but practically all other components of the global economy – demands systemic innovation. This means radical, system-wide innovations coupled with deep structural changes, rather than the incremental innovations offered up by incumbent state and market actors (Kemp, Schot et al. 1998). What this might look like in practice is “the renewal of a whole set of networked supply chains, patterns of use and consumption, infrastructures, regulations, etc., that constitute the socio-technical systems which provide basic services such as energy, food, mobility or housing” (Smith, Voß et al. 2010:439). Hence, in this view, sustainability must be sought through thoroughgoing re-conception and remaking of these systems of provision (Geels 2004b). The trouble is, developments within these systems tend to be channelled down restricted trajectories due to the ‘lock-in’ that constrains actors from realising, and at times even conceiving of, radically different pathways of development (Kemp, Schot et al. 1998). Such capacities to innovate in ways that might bring about radically different socio-technical arrangements, it is argued, do not generally exist within the confines of existing industrial regimes.

Hence, civil society actors – who operate outside of industrial regimes – are of prime importance in the societal reorientation of incumbent socio-technical systems of provision (Geels 2014). In contrast to the lock-in experienced within the confines of incumbent arrangements, it has been suggested⁵ that civil society might be the arena from which radically more sustainable systems are dreamt up, worked out, test-run and made ready for application *writ large* (Seyfang and Smith 2007, Smith 2007). One way that it has been suggested that they might do this is by extracting general lessons and principles from local projects, sharing them between projects, and developing them within global networks

⁵ My own understanding differs slightly, in that I also acknowledged that civil society might be an arena in which incumbent arrangements are reproduced.

(Seyfang and Haxeltine 2012, Hargreaves, Hielscher et al. 2013). Under this view, their transformative potential is bound up with their capacity to drive change ‘from the bottom up’, reconfiguring food systems as they learn from their experiences, extend their networks and grow their markets. Moreover, drawing heavily on Social Movement Theory (e.g. Benford and Snow 2000, Polletta and Jasper 2001), some scholars from within the field have suggested viewing civil society actors as sources of novel identities, new ways of framing societal issues, and alternative world views that complement the more sustainable systems of provision (Hess 2005, Smith 2005).

In addition to this body of work that looks at ‘bottom-up’ change, scholars of technology and innovation have also begun to pay attention to the capacity of civil society actors to drive change ‘from the top down’, e.g. through exerting influence over policies, institutions, business structures, social movements and so on. This work has revealed how civil society actors become involved in discursive contests with incumbent state and market actors (Geels and Verhees 2011). In this view, their aim is to re-frame debates such that pressure is applied to unsustainable incumbent actors and practices, and public opinion falls in favour of radically more sustainable alternatives.

Part of this involves participating in and building social movements that encourage mass publics to adopt different ways of viewing the world and their place within it. Another aspect involves actively contesting unsustainable incumbent arrangements by giving voice to societal issues and bringing them into the public eye, and by pressurising industries to respond (Penna and Geels 2012), e.g. through lobbying policymakers, staging direct actions and protests, engaging in framing struggles in the media, and mobilising resources and supporters (Smith 2012, Geels Forthcoming:33-4)⁶. And an additional aspect involves using this pressure to encourage and enable incumbent actors to apply incremental reforms to their practices so that they are more favourable in the context of changing public opinions, for instance by enrolling companies into voluntary certification schemes,

⁶ This is reflected in the literature on social movements, which follows civil society organisations as they mobilise mass publics in both material and symbolic struggles against incumbent unsustainable food regimes (Buttel, 1997; Hassenien, 2003; McMichael, 2005).

such as organic and fair-trade (Smith 2006, Smith 2007). Through this mixture of approaches, it is argued that civil society actors can at times create the initial conditions required for the destabilisation of incumbent industrial regimes and their replacement with more sustainable configurations (Turnheim and Geels 2012).

Finally, related empirical literatures reveal that the involvements of civil society actors in driving systemic change are not clear-cut; rather, they are muddled by their often complex relationships with incumbent actors⁷ (Seyfang and Smith 2007: 598). For example, in recognition of the generative capacities of civil society, attempts have been made by both state and market actors alike to influence and incorporate civil society innovations. On the one hand, market actors are quick to co-opt organic and fair-trade labelling initiatives developed by civil society organisations (Guthman 2004, Smith 2006, Hutchens 2011), at times stripping them of their radical characteristics so that they conform to market demands. On the other hand, public sector funds are made available to community groups for developing their projects, but they often come with conditionalities that shape the projects in certain ways, reflecting the confines of socio-technical lock-in (Seyfang and Smith 2007: 596). So it seems that although civil society innovations offer potentially more sustainable – yet economically and socially marginal – alternatives to incumbent socio-technical arrangements, they have a tendency to lose their transformative potential once they are taken up, partially and in modified form, by incumbent state and market actors (Smith 2007). Likewise, social movements also can be subject to the pressures of co-option and shaping (or ‘counter-movement tactics’) by incumbent actors (Hess 2005).

In conclusion, within these theoretical literatures there is both an excitement about the potential of civil society as a source of more sustainable socio-technical innovations and world-views, and concern over how these novel elements might be realised in the mainstream. It seems possible that the more civil society actors become involved with incumbent state and market actors under prevailing power relations, the more their

⁷ In actual fact – given that civil society, state and market domains are cross-cut by class and interpersonal connections – innovations and alternative world-views that seem to emerge from civil society are always shaped by the structures of state and market.

attempts to ‘unlock’ socio-technical change are threatened by the ‘lock-in’ that afflicts the mainstream (Smith 2007, Smith and Raven 2012). Thus, appreciating these dynamics of knowledge and power that exist within socio-technical systems may prove crucial to understanding the roles played by civil society in transitions towards a more sustainable future.

It is from this point of departure that I will now set out to clarify the purpose and contribution of my thesis within the context of this and the other debates that I have outlined above.

1.2.2 My thesis

It is the primary purpose of this thesis to improve understanding of how civil society actors seek to drive change towards sustainability in food systems. Hence, my main motivation is to make a significant contribution to academic literatures that engage with this problem. Another purpose that motivates the writing of this thesis is to make a contribution towards the aims of the SLRG by providing a robust, evidence-based yet theoretically informed analysis of this situation to policy-makers. This thesis is also motivated by a third purpose, to genuinely contribute relevant insights to those for whom it might mean the most, i.e. the civil society groups in the UK that are striving to create more sustainable future food systems. Although it is the first of these three purposes that I will primarily pursue in the following chapters of this text, it seems important to make a note of the other two commitments that will linger in the background for the time being⁸.

Henceforth, in this thesis I will explore how civil society actors in the UK are seeking to drive change towards sustainability in food systems, conceived in terms of systems innovation and socio-technical transition, at least initially. I will do this in full acknowledgement of the significant barriers to transformation presented by our lack of understanding, lack of consensus and lack of control over systems that seem locked-in to

⁸ A separate report of around 20 pages will be prepared for the policymakers who have funded the SLRG and a series of workshops will be held to communicate the research findings to the civil society groups involved in the research.

unsustainable configurations (Ethical Consumer No date). I will adopt an attitude of openness with respect to how food systems are defined and interpreted by different actors. I will hold that to seek 'change towards sustainability' implies striving for environmental integrity, social equity and personal wellbeing, however divergently manifested. I will adopt an understanding of civil society that leaves room for diversity in its application, but that clearly enshrines the characteristics that give it shape. I will carefully ground specific analyses of how civil society groups strive for sustainability in food systems within their empirical contexts. And I will endeavour to shake off bias from mainstream perspectives on framing debates (i.e. around sustainability in particular), instead adopting a critical sympathy towards civil society actors.

The empirical focus of the study will be on what civil society actors are doing, why they are doing it, and the consequences. As I will go on to explain in the following chapters, I will use a comparative case study design to explore the activities, intentions and interrelationships of specific sets of CSOs. In doing so, I will confront existing scholarly understandings of civil society roles in transition with empirical findings from three cases of CSOs and their networks. My case selection and sampling of organisations, which I will explain in CHAPTER 5, is informed by previous studies about the structure of UK civil society and the agency of civil society actors. However, it is also crucially designed to create a challenge for existing scholarly understandings of civil society roles in transition, by being based on my own framework that typifies the main roles in transition ascribed to CSOs by scholars.

This framework – which I will call the 'roles in transition' (RIT) framework – is a typology of four distinguishable roles in transition that have previously been ascribed to civil society actors and characterised within the literature on sustainability transitions (see Figure 1 below). To the best of my knowledge, these four different roles have not yet been systematically investigated within the same frame of reference – the bottom-up strategies of grassroots innovation and niche development are assumed to be quite separate from top-down engagements of normative contestation and regime reform, and have generally been studied in isolation (with some exceptions, such as Adrian Smith's study of the UK

organic movement; Smith 2006). This means that several important questions have yet to be answered about the relationships between these different roles and the organisations undertaking the different kinds of activities associated with them. In this study, all four of these roles will be investigated systematically and side-by-side, enabling me to uncover categories of practices and actors that have escaped the purview of previous scholarship, and to significantly nuance and extend existing theoretical frameworks for understanding CSO agency in transitions.

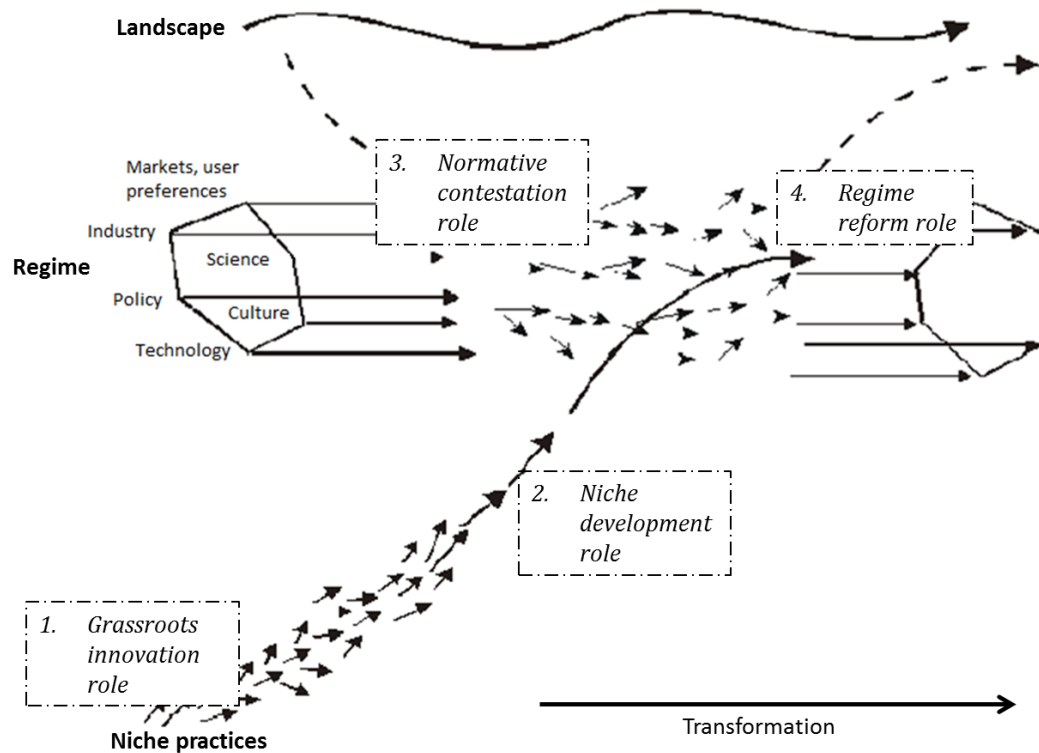


Figure 1. Typology of civil society roles in transition, diagram adapted from Geels (2002)

It should also be noted at this point that, by basing my study design on existing scholarship in the manner described above, I have introduced a limitation to the scope of the study. By prioritising parsimonious scrutiny and advancement of existing frameworks, instead of inductive ‘discovery’ of the distinguishable kinds of roles that civil society actors play in transitions, I cannot claim to offer an exhaustive guide on the topic. After all, it is possible that the initial deductive framing may not constitute a comprehensive model. However, I defend this decision on the grounds that the existing transitions scholarship on

the topic presents a particularly good opportunity for advancing knowledge in various ways, which I will outline further in later chapters (especially CHAPTER 4, CHAPTER 5 and CHAPTER 11).

1.2.3 Outline

PART I: Inputs

In CHAPTER 2 I will describe the broad context for sustainable food in the UK, including policy, market and civil society developments. The aim of this chapter will be to provide sufficient background to the cases, including relevant information about their wider environments, to allow for robust comparison and synthesis of my findings in later chapters. In CHAPTER 3 I will undertake a broad-ranging review of the principal academic literatures that engage with the empirical problem that I'm seeking to address, with the aim of conceptually underpinning and situating the thesis with respect to current scholarly debates. In CHAPTER 4 I will undertake an in-depth review of specific sections of the sustainability transitions literature that relate directly to the roles that civil society actors play within sustainability transitions. From this review, I will create the typology of roles that I introduced above (the RIT framework) aiming to encompass within it the various different scholarly understandings that I encounter. Then, in CHAPTER 5, I will describe the methodology through which I will investigate my three cases and operationalise the RIT framework. And in CHAPTER 6 I will briefly introduce the three cases, providing contextual information to enable the subsequent analysis.

PART II: Outputs

In CHAPTER 7, CHAPTER 8 and CHAPTER 9, I will present my findings about the activities, intentions and interrelationships of the CSOs in each of my three cases. Then, in CHAPTER 10, I will synthesise and compare these findings, and, in CHAPTER 11, I will evaluate my efforts to answer my research questions, highlight the most significant contributions of my research, and identify avenues for further research.

CHAPTER 2. Food, sustainability and civil society in the UK

In the introduction, I promised to ground the analysis firmly in its empirical context. Thus, I will now turn to the job of establishing the broad background to sustainable food and farming within which I will, as I progress through subsequent chapters, situate my findings and interpretations. The function of this chapter, then, is to provide sufficient background to the study to inform my choice of methodology (comparative case study) and justify my case selection (three cases of CSOs, one locally-situated in Southern England, one operating across Scotland, and the other operating internationally, but with a strong UK-focus) – though these are explained in chapter five; to describe the wider social world of food within which the cases are situated; and to allow for robust comparison and synthesis of my findings in the discussion chapter. Therefore, in this chapter I will attempt to sketch out the food policy, market and civil society landscape in the UK. In doing so, I will also explore the relations between food policy, market conditions and civil society, and consider how they have shaped each other over time. I will include some official market data to provide a sense of scale and significance of these developments, but my main aim will be to highlight underlying issues, historical patterns and trends that are pertinent to the transformation of food systems and which might find particular expression in the cases studied.

2.1 Policy and market developments

Policies relating to food and farming in the UK are made at a variety of levels, including at international, European, UK Government, devolved (e.g. Scottish Government) and local authority levels. For instance, some of the most important regulations affecting the agro-food landscape in the UK originate at the European Union (EU) level. However, EU legislation is disputed both at the European level (in Brussels) and at the national and sub-national levels where it must be implemented (and where significant room for manoeuvre often exists).

Likewise, various organisations of the United Nations and other Bretton Woods institutions provide both frameworks that guide and influence UK food policies (such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), as well as an arena in which dominant discourses about food policy are generated⁹ (Maye and Kirwan 2013: 1). Nonetheless, they exist at a significant remove from the UK context, are especially difficult to influence, and are seldom the focus of UK-based lobbyists and campaigners.

Thus, in this section I will focus on the levels at which most UK food policies are made, implemented and debated by UK-based CSOs, i.e. at (1) the level of the UK Government based in Westminster and Whitehall, (2) the level of the devolved administrations¹⁰, specifically the Scottish Government, and (3) local and metropolitan authority levels.

2.1.1 The United Kingdom

There are two major policy issues that sit in the background of the current UK food policy landscape and which are particularly influential: the post-war ‘productivist’ policies (Lang and Heasman 2004) and the policies of trade liberalisation set in motion during the Thatcher years. The overriding goals for UK food policy in the post-war period were to increase domestic food production and lower the price of food (Barling and Lang 2010, Lang, Dibb et al. 2011). Furthermore, joining the (then) European Economic Community in 1973 and accommodating to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) generated huge food surpluses in the UK and other EU states, which in turn provoked the UK and European authorities to subsidise sales of surplus grains, oils and animal products to the food processing industry. The main effects of these ‘productivist’ policies were (1) to create a situation in which the UK was more than 80% self-sufficient in food in the early 1980s, and

⁹ For instance, the FAO Rome Summit on World Food Security in June 2008 crystallised one of the fundamental assumptions behind the sustainable intensification approach; that global food production must double by 2050 to feed the predicted population of nine billion people.

¹⁰ The Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland administrations have recently assumed significant powers (over a range of related areas, including farming and rural issues, health, education, and transport), though they have yet to substantially de-couple from the broader UK policy environment.

(2) to create the conditions for what is now often referred to as a ‘junk-food boom’¹¹ in the UK and across Europe (Barling and Lang 2010).

These factors dominated food and agriculture policy right up until the Thatcher years when economic liberalisation started to steer policymaking in another direction. From the Thatcher years up until the present time, the level of domestic food production, in comparison to consumption, has declined steadily¹². Mirroring this trend, food prices in the UK also declined up until the late 2000s (Witheridge and Morris 2014). Both trends were a result of trade liberalisation policies set in place during the Thatcher regime, the latter – i.e. the cheapness of food – often being hailed as a major achievement of food policy under ‘productivism’ and Neoliberalism (Lang, Dobb et al. 2011).

Although many other policy issues have come to prominence in recent years, these two are still central to concerns about current food systems coming from UK civil society. The rise of AFNs and alternative food movements that emphasise the importance of *quality* over *quantity* (i.e. in response to productivism), and which call for a reconnection of producers and consumers (i.e. in response to trade liberalisation), are a strong indication of their ongoing influence. Other influential policy developments that came to the fore before the turn of the century include those associated with (1) food safety and (bio-) technology, and (2) agricultural modernisation and the environment.

The first development largely emerged in response to several food safety crises, including the E. Coli and Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) outbreaks during the 1980s and ‘90s. And although designed to protect consumers, the frameworks within which food safety was managed took form from the neoliberal politics of the time. The Conservative and Labour governments addressed the situation by shifting the responsibility for food governance from the public onto the private sector (i.e. through the arrangements of the

¹¹ This term refers to both the rapid increase in the availability of foods that are high in fats and sugars but low in essential micronutrients and the normalisation of a nutritionally poor high-fat and high-sugar diet amongst consumers in wealthy nations after the Second World War.

¹² In 2011, just over half of the UK food supply (51.8%) was sourced domestically (i.e. from within the UK), the majority of the rest being imported from other EU states. Defra (2012c). Food Statistics Pocketbook 2012. Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs. York, Crown Copyright.

1990 Food Safety Act) and allowing private sector interests to dominate policymaking processes in the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food (MAFF) (Ross 2012). And although their handling of the controversy around biotechnology developments (particularly genetic modification, or 'GM') was somewhat different – involving a greater level of input from the public and other stakeholders, and greater recognition of social and ethical dimensions, including sustainability concerns raised by independent researchers and campaigners (Lang, Dobb et al. 2011) – it nonetheless revealed widespread suspicion amongst the general public with regards to the motives of government policymakers taking decisions about GM.

In a similar vein, the second of these two new policy issues emerged in the aftermath of the foot and mouth disease outbreak, when the Prime Minister ordered a wide-ranging review of food production and consumption in the form of the Curry Commission (Curry Commission 2002). Sir Don Curry recommended a raft of measures to modernise the food sector, reconnect food producers and consumers, and increase the efficiency of food supply chains, all framed in the still-dominant policy discourse of neoliberalism. These new policy goals were to be taken up by the new Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), which was created in 2002. Moreover, Defra's earliest attempt to deal with the increasing evidence of environmental degradation linked to food production was to advocate strengthening the environmental stewardship agenda under the 2003 reforms to the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

These developments, both of which were set in motion by crises in the food system that became public, added to popular concerns and mistrust of incumbent food systems, and calls for reform. But it was public health, rather than food safety or the environment, that made the biggest impact on the food landscape in the first decade of the new millennium, and which continues to be an important priority for campaigners, activists and CSOs today. During the 2000's, a series of reports – including the National Audit Office's report in 2001, the annual report of the Chief Medical Officer in 2003, and the Chief Scientist's Foresight report in 2007 – raised mounting concerns about the healthiness of the food system by linking evidence of an 'obesity epidemic' to UK dietary trends (The Comptroller

and Auditor General 2001, Department of Health 2004, Foresight 2007). Thus, obesity came to be framed as an indication of 'systems failure' linked to the post-war focus on mass-producing cheap food of limited nutritional value (Batty 2011), and led to the publication of a white paper and the initiation of various cross-departmental policies (Lang, Dobb et al. 2011). And throughout this period, concern about obesity and the other so-called 'diseases of over-consumption' consolidated around children, as epitomised by Jamie Oliver's televised campaigns for school food reform in 2005 and 2008 (Oliver 2005, Oliver 2008), as well as the Government's creation of the School Food Trust, toughening of food standards, controlling of junk-food advertising to children, and releasing of £0.3 billion "to improve quality" of school food¹³ (Barling and Lang 2010).

A related development during the 2000s was the emergence of the idea that public procurement could contribute to the objectives of sustainable development (Sonnino and McWilliam 2011). In 2008, for instance, the public sector's combined purchasing budget was £150 billion (Morgan 2008), and purchases of food and drink made within public sector organisations accounted for around 6.5% of all sales in the food service sector in 2011 (Defra 2012c). Amongst various policy initiatives that were developed in response to this, Government launched the Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative in 2003, with the aims of increasing the consumption of nutritious food in public sector organisations, and reducing the environmental damage caused by food production and supply. In practice, however, procurement managers and policy-makers largely failed to incorporate sustainability criteria when applying the new guidelines¹⁴, instead favouring criteria related to price (Sustainable Procurement Task Force 2006, Morgan 2008).

¹³ The publication of the School Food Plan in 2013, which is yet to be implemented, is a more recent development in this policy area and demonstrates the ongoing relevance of the issues.

¹⁴ It's only much more recently that social policy innovations and political pressure from civil society organisations, as well as early work on this issue from the Scottish Executive, has stimulated more effective reforms across the UK – for instance, relating to the Government Buying Standards (GBS) for Food and Catering (led by Defra) that were introduced in September 2011 and which mandate all Government departments and their agencies to source food more sustainably. Defra. (2011b). "New Government Buying Standards for food and catering." [SD Scene](#) Retrieved 10th June, 2013.

Then, during the late 2000s, a few major events re-oriented policies on food and farming. In 2006 the Stern Review (Stern 2006) revealed the large contribution from agriculture to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and the Food and Agriculture Organization showed that livestock production accounts for the bulk of agricultural GHG emissions, thereby narrowing the focus for blame (Steinfeld, Gerber et al. 2006). Moreover, in 2007 global food price spikes sparked off protests, rioting and international concern about the security of food supplies. The crisis continued into 2008 when the Brown government established the UK's Committee on Climate Change, introduced the Climate Change Act, created the Department for Energy and Climate Change, commissioned the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit to review UK food policy since the pre-WW2 era (Cabinet Office Strategy Unit 2008), and established both the Council of Food Policy Advisors and the Food Policy Unit in Defra. Thus, in the few years up until the recent change of government, the food landscape was strongly influenced by the twin concerns for food security and sustainability, both being framed in relation to climate change.

Following the publication of the abovementioned Cabinet Office Strategy Unit report (which was called 'Food Matters'), Defra published two further reports (the 'UK Food Security Assessment' and 'Food 2030') that set out an integrated policy framework for food that was inter-departmental and cross-sectoral, and which brought together the issues of food security and sustainability (HM Government 2009, HM Government 2010b). Food Matters also set into motion the government's Chief Scientific Advisor's Foresight report on the future of food and farming, which was not published until after the new government came to power (Foresight. The Future of Food and Farming 2011). Though these initiatives were applauded by some civil society organisations and academics at the time, they were also criticised for lacking substance (Barling and Lang 2010) and for being disproportionately supportive of top-down governance and technological solutions (House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee 2012).

Against the background of this and the economic crisis, the Coalition Government brought in another raft of changes. Firstly, big cuts were made to food policy vehicles such as the Food Policy Unit, the various environmental agencies (losing their policy roles), and the

FSA (losing responsibility for nutrition, which has been inserted into the Department of Health), whilst other bodies such as the regional assemblies, the Sustainable Development Commission, the Council of Food Policy Advisors, Consumer Focus, and the FSA-led 'Integrated Advice to Consumers', either have been or are still in the process of being dissolved completely. Secondly, the government's food and farming policies were reoriented around 'sustainable intensification' (Garnett and Godfray 2012), with Food 2030 being replaced as a guiding framework by the Foresight report. In addition, Defra's activities were refocused away from consumer advice and back towards playing the old MAFF role of "industry sector promotion body"; i.e. emphasising export growth and competitiveness, and positioning the UK farming sector's role in feeding the world's growing population (Barling 2011). Thus, despite the seeming move towards concerns with food quality and the wider social implications of food production and consumption, these latter two changes suggest the endurance and/or re-emergence of the productivist agenda (albeit re-framed in terms of threats to global, rather than national, food security).

Another development from the Coalition Government has been a shift in the framing of the relationships between State, Market and Civil Society – as encapsulated by the notions 'Big Society' and 'Localism'¹⁵. However, there has been both continuity and change in the way that the Government relates to and frames its relationship with civil society since the Coalition Government came to power. For instance, continuity is found in the on-going reference to the previous Labour government's notion of 'partnership working' within new policy documents; for an example see the Department for Communities and Local Government's community orchards initiative (DCLG 2011, Macmillan 2013a). During the previous Labour government's term in parliament, government engagement with civil society actors grew to unprecedented levels (Alcock 2012). However, change is indicated by the "proclamations of ministers and other policymakers" which suggest that the Big Society heralds a move away from the partnership agenda (Macmillan 2013a: 16). What is clear is that the Coalition Government is not prepared to invest in partnerships with civil

¹⁵ A recent policy measure related to this which is of potential relevance to food production is the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework. DCLG (2012). *National Planning Policy Framework. Department for Communities and Local Government. London, Crown copyright.*

society actors in the way that the previous Labour government did, which the Coalition Government explains with reference to the overwhelming need to achieve deficit reduction (Macmillan 2013a).

Moreover, uncertainty about the 'Big Society' and 'Localism' agendas has already been articulated from scholarly (e.g. Featherstone, Ince et al. 2012, Macmillan 2013b) and practitioner settings. In written evidence submitted to the Environmental Audit Committee as part of an enquiry into the sustainability of the food system, UK-based CSO Sustain put it like this:

““Localism” could help to bolster such initiatives [i.e. community food enterprises], and the planning system could also give local communities more power to make their food system more sustainable. However, “localism” is being proposed at the same time as major cuts in government spending, including at local level. Given the dominant role of large national, and indeed multinational food and agriculture companies in shaping the world’s food and farming system, our concern is that local authorities and other local actors will simply be too small and under-funded, in comparison. Their lack of power will severely limit the ability of “localism” to protect or create sustainable and local food systems.” (House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee 2012: Ev 133)

On a related point, policy discussions around how civil society actors contribute towards sustainability in food systems have often focussed inappropriately on the question of how much food, of improved sustainability credentials, they are directly involved in the provisioning of. This reflects a broader trend within the field of public policy evaluation that favours single quantitative, outcome-based measures over multiple qualitative, process-based measures (Power 1994). In relation to community composting initiatives, Slater and Aiken (2014) argue that standardised measurement of quantifiable outcomes risks driving homogenisation in a field that is currently highly innovative and contributing to multiple different policy agendas.

As another example of this, but related to community food-growing initiatives, early stages of the evaluation of the Big Lottery's Local Food Fund focussed on the volume of food produced and area of land under production by the community food enterprises and other CSOs that received funding. Predictably, they found that the volumes and areas were small. However, subsequent evaluations and other assessments of community food-growing enterprises also highlighted a great variety of direct sustainability benefits (Daintith and Page 1999, Kirwan, Ilbery et al. 2013). They include (*inter alia*) improved confidence and employability, as well as reduced stress, greater satisfaction and higher levels of happiness for the people involved; community cohesion, capacity building, crime reduction and the emergence of learning networks in the local areas where the initiatives are based; and direct benefits to the local environments of the initiatives, including those associated with urban green spaces.

2.1.2 Scotland

The Scottish Government only gained powers over food-related policy areas – including farming and rural issues, health, education, and transport – in 1999 (though it is still represented in Brussels by the UK government). However, food and farming in Scotland is quite distinctive in comparison to the situation in England, and since 1999 the Scottish Government has developed a national framework of food and farming policies that reflect this (The Scottish Government 2009a).

In 2008, the Scottish Executive launched a nationwide consultation on the Government's vision for food in Scotland. More than 500 individuals and organisations, representing a wide variety of interests, submitted comments, and many were engaged in stakeholder events to develop policies. The top concerns raised by all the stakeholders (Leat, Revoredo-Giha et al. 2011) were: (1) diet and nutrition, (2) local food production and consumption, (3) environmental sustainability, (4) corporate power, and (5) the lack of capacity to implement change. Hence, many were frustrated when in 2010, the government published 'Recipe for Success – Scotland's National Food and Drink Policy', because the majority of the concerns they raised were marginalised in favour of a

simplistic narrative about export growth and food security framed in a global context (The Scottish Government 2009a). As with the recent development of food policies in Westminster, the move to create a national policy framework for Scotland was strongly driven by concerns over food security in the aftermath of the food price spikes and credit crunch (Gill and Johnston 2010: 624). An additional concern for Scottish policymakers that is reflected in the framing of the report is ‘the Scottish diet’, which has been linked to some of the highest obesity levels in the developed world, high levels of diet-related chronic diseases and shortened life expectancy (The Scottish Government 2009a, Leat, Revoredo-Giha et al. 2011).

Another relevant feature of the current Scottish policy environment, which has influenced the development of community food initiatives in particular, is the Climate Challenge Fund (CCF). A Scottish Government programme administered by Keep Scotland Beautiful, the CCF has provided 563 projects across Scotland with funding worth more than £46.9 million since it was launched in 2008. The CCF has a food theme – one of four themes – which supports community food growing projects that promote the local production and consumption of food. The main aim of funding these projects is to “reduce their community's carbon emissions in order to improve their local environment and our shared global environment” (Keep Scotland Beautiful 2013). The CCF is set to continue running until March 2015.

2.1.3 Local and metropolitan authorities

At the current time, Local Authorities (LAs) in the UK are responsible for implementing policies that affect a range of food-related issues, particularly by providing public services such as schooling, social care and (very recently) health care. They are also responsible for ensuring that food safety regulations are met in food outlets, including private businesses. However, there have recently been substantial pressures on these services resulting from budget cuts and restructuring, leaving LAs in a very difficult position, unable to think much beyond the survival of key support services.

Nonetheless, a more positive development at the local and metropolitan levels is the recent appearance and proliferation of county-wide and metropolitan food charters, food strategies and food policy councils, which follows the lead of Canadian and US examples (Marsden 2012). These emerging policy frameworks emphasise the multifunctionality of food systems and a more integrated view of food than that found in England and Scotland. Good examples include the 2007 Newquay Growth Area Food Strategy (Sonnino, 2011) and the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership. However, they are often weak on implementation, needing extra funding to generate evidence and share experiences across networks of city regions.

In general, central government support for these developments and the local food movement more generally – which grew significantly in the 2000s, see section 2.2.2 below – has been relatively weak. In fact, local food systems have been largely absent from policy debates about food security up until very recently¹⁶ (Kirwan and Maye 2013).

2.2 Developments in civil society

In parallel to developments in UK policy over the past two decades, which have seen food systems come under increasing scrutiny with respect to their safety, healthiness, fairness, and economic as well as environmental sustainability, UK consumer-citizens have become progressively more aware and supportive of what are sometimes known as ‘alternative’ or ‘ethical’ foods (Lang 2010). Some theoretical reflections on this are provided in the following chapter, but for now it will suffice to remark on a significant growth in related behaviours. Firstly, there has been growth in civic involvement in food systems (sometimes known as ‘food citizenship’), at all junctures, including production, trade, distribution, marketing, consumption and post-consumption (see Figure 2 below). Secondly, there has been growth in the size and influence, as well as the number and

¹⁶ In terms of historic support, Defra has commissioned some research into related areas, such as using the concepts of food miles and ‘local and in season’ as indicators for sustainability, but whether this evidence will be used to inform policy is yet to be seen (Brooks, M., C. Foster, M. Holmes and J. Wiltshire (2011). "Does consuming seasonal foods benefit the environment? Insights from recent research." *Nutrition Bulletin* **36**(4): 449-453.).

variety, of alternative food movements, i.e. encompassing “the social activity of sustainable agriculturalists, local food advocates, environmentalists, food security activists, and others who are working to bring about changes at a variety of different levels of the agro-food system” (Hassanein 2003). And thirdly, there has been growth in consumer demand for these alternative foods (sometimes known as ‘ethical consumption’), which are marketed on account of properties relating to issues such as animal welfare, sustainable agriculture, fair trade, low-waste systems, and ‘healthy’ or local food, in addition to taste. I will now briefly discuss these three strands of developments (sections 2.2.1, 2.2.2 and 2.2.3) before providing a summary of the principal historical conditions – including policies, market and civil society developments – that have shaped and continue to influence how civil society actors in the UK are currently seeking to drive change towards sustainability in food systems.

2.2.1 Civic involvement

Many of the practical initiatives shown in Figure 2 below are organised informally and allow for ad-hoc participation, whereas others have become more formalised. A distinctive characteristic that most hold in common is an interest in and commitment to tackling issues of inequality. This means that in practice they are often constituted, governed, and managed along communitarian lines. Indeed, the rise of these more communitarian forms of civic participation in food systems was accompanied by the Government’s creation of the Community Interest Company (CIC) as a new legal form, and has been linked by some to a resurgence of the co-operative movement in the UK (Simmonds 2011). Other social movements also have close links to the rise of both ethical consumption and food citizenship, including (*inter alia*) the organic and biodynamic movements, the slow food movement, the local food movement and the food sovereignty movement. At the current time, numerous UK-based CSOs exist that are concerned with the development of these movements and the associated practical initiatives featured in Figure 2 below (*n.b.* although the content of the graphic is organised using market-based/supply-chain categories, it could alternatively have been organised using political categories to emphasise the links between social movements and civic activities).

Though they are governed independently, many of these CSOs and the practical projects that they are associated with are currently reliant on public sector funding to make up a significant part of their income, though the specific objectives and sources of funds vary (including, *inter alia*, payments for adult care, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, child and youth education, carbon reduction, waste minimisation, health promotion, and food production). However, the availability of funds is currently being restricted under government austerity measures (discussed in section 2.1.1 above). For instance, 30% budget cuts at Defra and 28% cuts to local authority funding were announced in 2011, and even the Big Lottery Fund, which is also public sector money, is set to be restricted by 20% (Food Ethics Council 2011: 30).

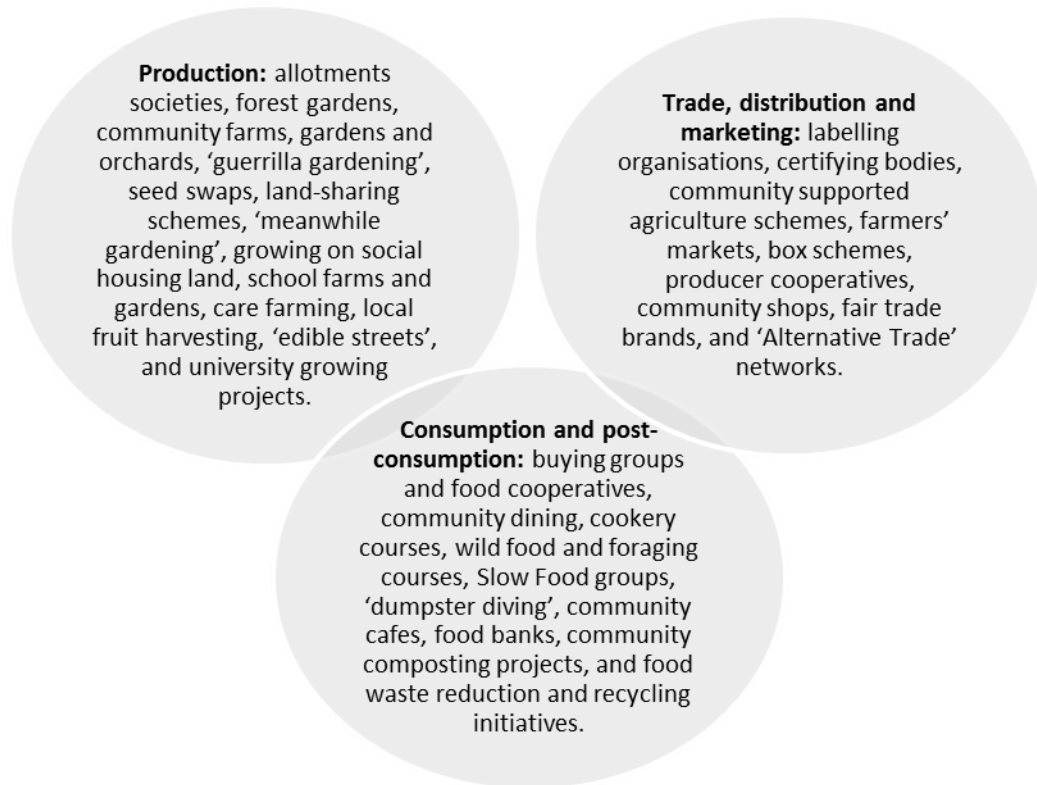


Figure 2. Some of the different forms that civic involvement in food systems has taken in the UK.

Moreover, the Big Lottery Fund's Local Food Programme – which provided an injection of more than £50 million into the local food sector – ceased administering funds in 2011, and all funded projects were required to end by March 2014 (Kirwan, Ilbery et al. 2013).

Hence, charitable sector funding sources that support these initiatives and movements and have offered an alternative to public money over the past two decades will likely come under much fiercer competition in the future. Furthermore, the amounts of money available through these sources tend to be much more modest; for example, between 2008 and 2013, one of the prominent funders of public benefit work on food and farming (the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation) provided grants worth a total of only £5.1 million to 80 different organisations (Esmée Fairbairn Foundation 2013).

Another important source of funding for food and farming sector CSOs and projects is the general public, who give money through bequests, donations and subscriptions, as well as by paying for goods and services. For instance, Oxfam started to sell ‘fair-trade’ products in the 1950s, in response to concerns about the unfairness of the international trade policies of the time (Renard 2003, World Fair Trade Organisation 2011). For some organisations, income raised through trading makes up the largest part of their financial resource base. Sometimes known as ‘social enterprise’, this can take many forms and has been much debated as a possible route to independence for the sector more generally. However, it is not a viable alternative for funding many of the initiatives mentioned above, especially those which address social care and target disadvantaged groups, as well as those that are necessarily informal and ad hoc. Both social enterprise and community ownership – whereby members of a community of service users provide investment to create or buy out services – have been framed as ways to realise the Big Society vision in a time of fiscal austerity (Perry 2010).

2.2.2 Social movements

The longer term development of alternative food movements took off in the post war period, with organic and biodynamic agriculture, as well as alternative trading systems (which became known as ‘fair-trade’), emerging in Europe and the US. However, support for these alternative practices was very restricted up until the 1970’s. At this time there was an initial surge in the numbers of people taking up organic and biodynamic farming and growing, associated with the ‘back to the land’ and self-sufficiency movements,

though the growth of the biodynamic movement lagged behind the growth curve of the organic movement. During the same period, alternative trade networks, largely maintained by CSOs of various types, grew their activities amongst a core of committed activists and ethical consumers (Hutchens 2011). Then, in the 80's and 90's, consumer support for organic and fairly-traded foods grew rapidly in response to the availability of these foods within mainstream retail outlets, which was in turn facilitated by the development of certification and labelling systems. For instance, the creation of the EU's organic standard in 1991 enabled new forms of financial support for organic farming, resulting in a significant increase in supply (Soil Association 2012c: 9).

The local food movement in the UK also grew considerably during the same period, reflecting increasing interest in local food. This was supported strongly by UK-based CSOs including the Soil Association, the Transition Towns Network, the New Economics Foundation and Sustain, amongst others, and then given a big boost by the Big Lottery Fund's Local Food Programme in the 2000s. Although some local food activists have come into conflict with fair-trade campaigners over the issue of food miles (Morgan 2010), in the last few years these two camps have come together – along with peasant farmer movements and other global food movements – under the banner of 'food sovereignty' (Food Sovereignty now! 2013).

2.2.3 Consumer demand

Independent data on the current status of alternative food markets in the UK and Europe are sparse¹⁷ (Lang 2010), but in 2008 the Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD) stated that ethical consumerism had become mainstream in Europe. Of the 4000 consumers from six European countries that the IGD polled, 69% reported that they actively looked for ethical factors when shopping for food products (Lang 2010). Moreover, UK consumers were shown to be the most committed to ethical consumerism out of the six nationalities, which also included France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Poland. And in terms of

¹⁷ The fact that Defra does not produce this data could be seen as an indication of the low status of alternative food markets within mainstream food and agriculture policy in the UK.

market growth, the value of the UK market for organic foods grew from less than £200 million in 1995 to more than £2000 million in 2007 (Soil Association 2012a).

However, in terms of market share, organic foods represented only 1-2% of the total food market in the UK during the middle of the 2000s (Lang 2010). In fact, total sales of ‘ethical’ food and drink products – including organic as well as fair-trade, free range and freedom foods – made up only 6.5% of UK household food and drink sales in 2010 (Defra 2012c), and the local food market in the UK was estimated to constitute only 3.5% of total sales in 2011 (Kirwan and Maye 2013)¹⁸. Moreover, the recent food price spikes and the credit crunch have both had negative impacts on ethical consumption and food citizenship, with many casual consumers of organic foods switching to mainstream products as a result (Soil Association 2012a). So, although consumer markets for alternative foods have exhibited rapid growth, they still represent a very small proportion of all food sales (including food, drinks and catering).

2.3 Summary

Table 1 below summarises some of the principal historical conditions – including policies, market and civil society developments – that have shaped and continue to influence how civil society actors in the UK are currently seeking to drive change towards sustainability in food systems. It is not intended to be exhaustive, as compiling such a list is beyond the scope of this study. Nonetheless, I hope that it will help me to situate my findings and interpretations in later chapters. On a related note, what the table perhaps conceals – but which I have hopefully made clear in the preceding discussion – is that despite the significant growth in food citizenship, alternative food movements, and ethical consumption documented above, the food policy landscape remains dominated by powerful economic interests (Ethical Consumer No date). Thus, notwithstanding the rise of concerns around food sovereignty, quality, health and the environment, neoliberal and productivist framings are still prevalent and imprint themselves on the ways that

¹⁸ Due to the way that this is estimated, this figure is likely to contain considerable overlap with the figures for the organic market

alternative and mainstream food systems are recognised, evaluated and supported (or not) by policy.

Table 1. Summary of relevant policy, market and civil society developments (1939-present)

Dates	Policy and market developments	Civil society developments
1940's – 1960's	➤ Productionism, surpluses and junk food boom	➤ Slow growth of alternative food movements
1970's – 1990's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Opening markets to EU products and shrinking domestic food production ➤ Food scares and handing responsibility to private sector 	➤ Rapid growth of niche markets for Organic and Fair-trade products
2000's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Food Safety Act and recognition of consumer interests ➤ Foot & Mouth outbreak, Curry Commission and scrutiny of the food system ➤ Environmental issues in food production, stewardship role for farmers within the CAP and the GM debate ➤ 'Obesity epidemic' white paper, behaviour change policies and further scrutiny of the food system ➤ Climate change, food price spikes and further scrutiny of the food system, including publication of Food 2030, UK Food Security Assessment, the Foresight report, the Green Food Project and Shaping the Future ➤ Devolution of powers to the regional assemblies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mainstreaming of Organic, Fair-trade and other alternative foods ➤ Growth in civic involvement in food systems ➤ Campaigns for school food reform ➤ Launch of the Local Food Fund and injection of £50 million into the local food movement
2010's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Scottish food policy, Recipe for Success and the Climate Challenge Fund ➤ Credit Crunch (impact of), public sector budget cuts and technocratic discourse of 'sustainable intensification' 	➤ Local food movement links with global food sovereignty movements

CHAPTER 3. Conceptual underpinnings

As stated in the introduction, this thesis will explore how civil society actors in the UK are seeking to drive change towards sustainability in food systems. At the most rudimentary level, the focus will be on what civil society actors are trying to achieve, i.e. discovering what they are doing, investigating why they are doing it, and exploring the consequences. However, a more refined analytical approach will be sought. But before turning to an in-depth discussion of this, some theoretical foundations will first be laid down.

The topic of this study can be broken down into the following fundamental elements. ‘Change towards sustainability’ is at once the broad social process and real world problem that this study addresses. ‘Civil society’ actors are the subjects of this enquiry. ‘Food systems’ constitute the object field; they provide the domain of application in relation to which civil society actors seek to have agency; they are that which is changed. This section will attempt to provide some foundations with respect to these three elements.

3.1 Change towards sustainability

This thesis sets out to make its primary contribution towards an emerging field of study known as ‘Sustainability Transitions’ (Grin, Rotmans et al. 2010, Markard, Raven et al. 2012). This field has developed over the past 10-15 years and is strongly influenced by work in evolutionary economics and the sociology of science and technology (e.g. Kuhn, 1962; Dosi, 1982; Breschiet al., 1997; Williams, 1996). Scholars within the field share an interest in the issue of how fundamental structural changes in socio-technical systems (known as ‘transitions’) have come about in the past, and how they might be deliberately steered towards sustainability in the future. According to Markard et al. (2012):

“A transition involves far-reaching changes along different dimensions: technological, material, organizational, institutional, political, economic, and socio-cultural. Transitions involve a broad range of actors and typically unfold over considerable time-spans (e.g., 50 years and more). In the course of such a

transition, new products, services, business models, and organizations emerge, partly complementing and partly substituting for existing ones. Technological and institutional structures change fundamentally, as well as the perceptions of consumers regarding what constitutes a particular service (or technology)."

One of the central theses of this field is that these transitions come about as the result of disruption by path-breaking (or 'systemic') innovations (Kemp, Schot et al. 1998). Supporters of this view argue that systemic innovations counter the dominant dynamics of change in socio-technical systems, which tend towards 'lock-in', i.e. stabilisation of, and incremental developments in, specific configurations of technologies and social arrangements. These configurations are referred to as 'socio-technical regimes'. Thus, whereas innovation within socio-technical regimes tends to progress according to step-by-step improvements within a largely unchanged framework, transitions are driven by systemic innovation, which implies radical transformation of the framework conditions. Once 'unlocked' by systemic innovations, socio-technical regimes are open to being reconfigured, or even replaced by alternative configurations (Geels 2002).

According to this view, systemic innovations tend to emerge and develop within 'niches' that offer them protection from the selection pressures of incumbent socio-technical regimes (Kemp et al., 1998). However, the ability of these new configurations to eventually replace incumbent regimes is dependent on the weakening of those regimes to open up opportunities for change (Geels 2002). This weakening may occur due to bottom-up pressure from niches (Rotmans and Loorbach 2010), or else it may come from internal tensions within regimes, or because of unfolding events at a global scale, such as social, environmental or economic crises or cultural shifts – known as 'landscape dynamics' – putting pressure on regimes (Geels and Schot 2007). Hence, for transitions to take place, the development of alternative niches must coincide with overarching developments in socio-technical landscape dynamics and problematic conditions in regimes. In this way, the alignment of developments at niche, regime and landscape levels can lead to the reconfiguration of socio-technical elements such that a new regime takes hold.

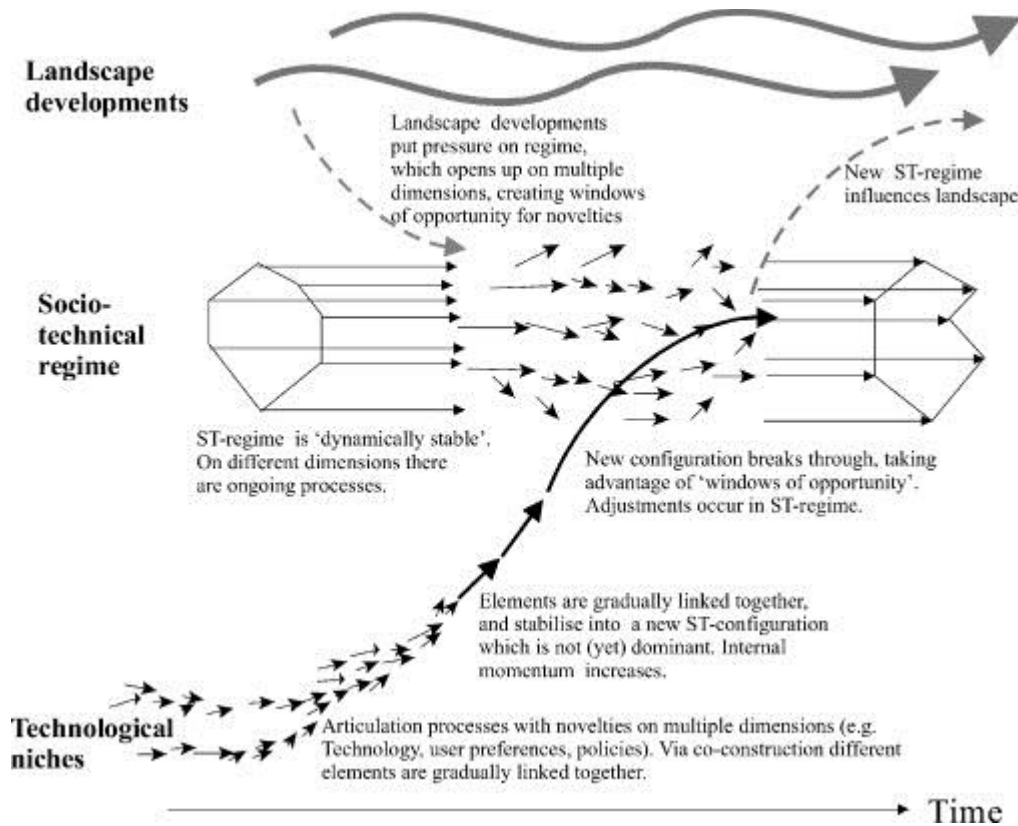


Figure 3. The multi-level perspective on transitions (Geels 2004a)

This account of socio-technical transitions is known as the Multi-Level Perspective, or ‘MLP’, which provides a specific take on the processes involved (see Figure 3). It was developed from a number of historical studies that drew largely on secondary literature (e.g. Geels 2002) and has, to date, mostly been applied to ex post-facto cases. However, concerned with how to drive transitions towards sustainability (or ‘sustainability transitions’), scholars have used the MLP and other related frameworks – such as Transition Management (TM), Strategic Niche Management (SNM) and the Technological Innovation Systems (TIS) approaches (Rotmans, Kemp et al. 2001, Markard and Truffer 2008, Rotmans and Loorbach 2010, Markard, Raven et al. 2012) – to analyse the dynamics of contemporary systems. Elzen et al. (2011) say that these are studies of what they call ‘transitions in the making’, to emphasise the fact that they are ‘unfinished’ or ‘unproven’ transitions. Studies of this sort – of which this thesis is an example – have already been carried out with respect to food (Spaargaren, Oosterveer et al. 2013), as well as energy (Kern and Smith 2008), water/sanitation (Pahl-Wostl 2007), mobility (Kemp, Avelino et al.

2011), housing (Smith 2007) and other sectors, in order to test management concepts and illuminate potential pathways towards sustainability in the systems through which these fundamental social goods are provisioned (i.e. ‘systems of provision’).

To distinguish this from other – historically-based – uses of the term ‘transition’, Markard et al. (2012) define ‘sustainability transitions’ as follows:

“Sustainability transitions are long-term, multi-dimensional, and fundamental transformation processes through which established socio-technical systems shift to more sustainable modes of production and consumption. One particularity of sustainability transitions is that guidance and governance often play a particular role (Smith et al., 2005). There might be long-term goals, for example, that inform the direction of the transition. In this case, transition is purposeful and intended, and a broad range of actors is expected to work together in a coordinated way. In a guided transition, political actors, as well as regulatory and institutional support, can be expected to play a major role. Finally, we have to note that what is considered sustainable can be subject to interpretation and might change over time (Garud et al., 2010).” (Markard, Raven et al. 2012: 956)

At this point it is worth flagging up a significant implication of taking this approach for the validity and generalisability of such studies, as questions relating to this issue frequently arise in critical debates about sustainability transitions. Whereas historical (*ex post facto*) studies can be framed around identifiable changes that have already unfolded (leaving a historical record of evidence), studies of sustainability transitions in the making are often framed normatively, with respect to desired changes that have not yet come about, or have partially unfolded. Hence, they are uncertain and ambiguously delineated in ways that can make intentionality even harder to disentangle than if hindsight were possible. However, so long as the study is designed in such a way that it can tease out and make explicit the different views (actor-level and systemic) and is framed in such a way that, within it, accounts of the past and future are used to explain action and intentions in the present, then this can be a strength rather than a problem of the research (Brown,

Rappert et al. 2000). Within the SNM and TM literatures, for instance, this is achieved by focussing on the processes involved in transition (i.e. learning, adaptation, network-building, and so on), as the outcomes are unknown (Rotmans and Loorbach 2010).

A closely related but quite different model to the MLP is the 'Triple Embeddedness Framework' (TEF) proposed by Geels (2014). The TEF draws on the same theoretical influences and develops some of the same concepts as the MLP; however it takes 'firms-in-an-industry' as its basic unit of analysis and sets out to discover the drivers behind the destabilisation of incumbent regimes (cf. the development and diffusion of niches). Hence, as a lens on transition it presents a regime-based view, in contrast to the MLP, which presents a niche-based view of transition.

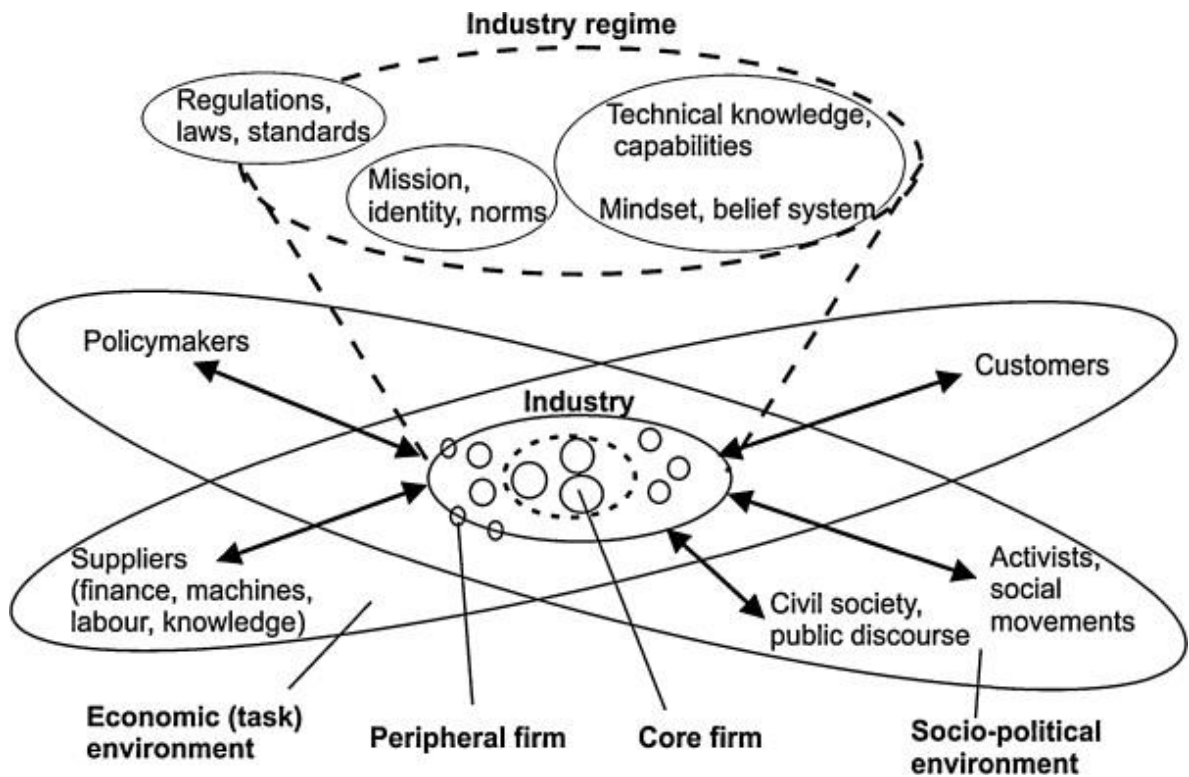


Figure 4. The Triple Embeddedness Framework (TEF) (Geels 2014)

In the TEF, firms-in-an-industry (such as food businesses) are triply embedded within: 1) an industry regime, 2) a task environment, and 3) an institutional environment. An 'industry regime' is similar to a socio-technical regime, except that certain elements of a socio-technical regime are considered as exogenous to industry regimes. These elements

form part of either the 'task environment' (which exerts pressures on firms to perform economically) or the 'institutional environment' (which exerts pressures on firms to perform under socially-determined criteria of 'legitimacy'). In this framework, industry norms and rules, missions and identity, established practices and capabilities, voluntary standards, industry bodies and lobby groups become locked into semi-stable configurations, or 'industry regimes' (cf. 'socio-technical regimes'). Competitor firms, suppliers, customers and consumers create the task environments in which firms operate, whereas government bodies, politicians, civil society groups, social movements and activists constitute their institutional environments.

In the TEF, endogenous and exogenous processes co-evolve to produce either stability or destabilisation-and-transition for industry regimes. In order for an industry regime to perpetuate, the firms in that industry must be committed to it; when commitment to the regime wanes, the regime is destabilised. On the contrary, so long as the regime performs well economically and in terms of legitimacy, levels of commitment should be high. However, pressures from the task environment (such as path-breaking innovations that outcompete regime technologies, or shifts in consumer preferences in favour of niche technologies), and the institutional environment (such as legislation that bans regime technologies, or public campaigns against the use of regime technologies/in favour of niche technologies) can weaken commitment. When commitment is low, individual firms break ranks by openly disputing industry norms, championing niche technologies, leaving industry associations, and so on. Drawing on insights from scholars of management and organisational studies, Turnheim and Geels' (2012: 38) describe distinct stages of declining commitment and corresponding action, from (1) blind denial, through (2) incremental responses to problems and then (3) increasing doubts and diversification, to (4) decline and destabilisation.

Moreover, Turnheim and Geels suggest that when enough firms lose commitment and exit the industry a landslide can occur, opening up different possible future pathways. Destabilisation could simply lead to dissolution of the regime without it being replaced by another regime. But alternatively it could lead to reorientation of the incumbent regime

(with adjustments to regime practices/form but not purposes/function), or re-creation of the regime (with new purposes/function as well as practices/form being re-defined). Moreover, these transition pathways will not necessarily be smooth – they might stop and start, grind to a halt, skip phases, or recursively cycle through the same initial phases without ever reaching a new outcome (Penna and Geels 2012: 1015).

These important differences in transition contexts and pathways have been shown by scholars of sustainability transitions (Berkhout, Smith et al. 2004, Smith, Stirling et al. 2005, Dahle 2007, Geels and Schot 2007, de Haan and Rotmans 2011) to offer different sets of opportunities for civil society to have influence. Depending on the prevalence and degree of landscape pressures, and the adaptive capacity of regimes, efforts to drive transition will push socio-technical change in different directions, with different consequences for empowerment (Berkhout, Smith et al. 2004). Transition may be driven largely from within incumbent regimes, or it may be pushed from the outside, by niche actors and social movement activists. Hence, if transition is mostly steered from within the regime, then the outcomes are more likely to be incremental reform and/or re-orientation than the radical change and recreation suggested by the niche-based view of the MLP (Berkhout, Smith et al. 2004).

This brief introduction to sustainability transitions – which has opened up many questions about the agency, intentionality and interdependencies of different kinds of actors in transitions – will be expanded and explored in more depth later on. Before that, however, I will discuss my treatment of civil society within this study, and then move on to discuss the place of food systems.

3.2 Civil society

In the introductory chapter I outlined some scholarly understandings of civil society and provided my own definition for use in this thesis. I will now briefly reiterate these discussions, whilst opening up some more questions and going into greater depth on relevant issues. For instance, I will attempt to address the following questions: What are the principle features of civil society? How is civil society structured? How do CSOs

differ? How do they develop strategy and agency (over time)? How do they interact with each other? What are the implications of adopting the term ‘civil society’ rather than other, possibly relevant, alternatives to describe the actors at the heart of this study? I will then try and relate all this to the above discussion on sustainability transitions.

Civil society is a slippery concept. Its meaning is hotly debated by academics, policy-makers and practitioners who weigh it up against other competing concepts (e.g. ‘third sector’, ‘non-profit sector’, ‘voluntary sector’, and so on) that offer different interpretations (Garton 2009, Alcock 2010). Its historical origins are multiple and contested (Edwards 2009), as are notions of societal function. Moreover, legalistic and regulatory approaches to civil society vary widely from place to place, and there is considerable ambiguity with respect to certain aspects of this within legal frameworks in the UK (Garton 2009). Nonetheless, there is some common ground upon which these debates unfold.

In parallel to the term ‘third sector’, with which it is often used interchangeably, civil society is conventionally understood in distinction to ‘state’ and ‘market’ (Paton 2009). Hence, scholarly debates about historical origins, societal functions and the legalistic-regulatory status of civil society/the third sector alluded to above are informed by this triad. For instance, Waltzer (1998) argues that civil society mediates between the ideals of political unity in the state and a-political plurality in the market, and that this is manifested through the production of countless hybrid organisational forms and associations. Alcock (2010), on the other hand, argues that the civil society/third sector lacks intrinsic features; i.e. it is merely a residual category. Thus, he suggests that it is discursively constructed by “policy discourses that distinguish it from the state and market and seek to promote the values that they associate with this” (2010: 21). Likewise, Evers (2013) suggests that it is frequently used to justify changes to public and welfare policies.

Nonetheless, within the context of this thesis, I have decided to use the term civil society instead of the third sector. I have done so following Deakin (2001), who suggests that the latter plays into the notion of residuality mentioned above. Moreover, given that the

literature on sustainability transitions clearly suggests intrinsic characteristics for civil society, as discussed in section 1.2.1 (see especially Seyfang and Smith 2007, Geels 2014), this decision is compatible with my underlying theorisation.

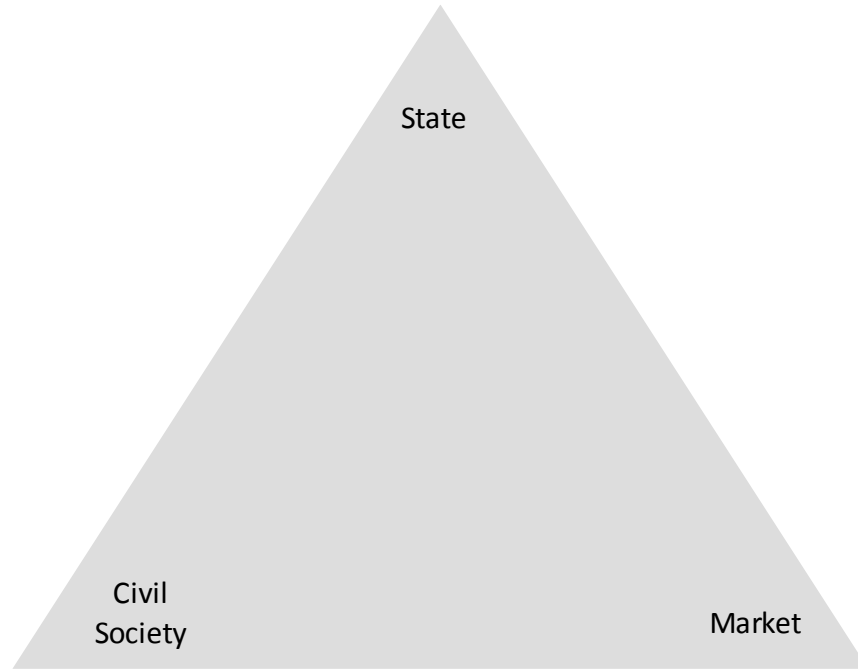


Figure 5. The three sector model (after Paton, 2009)

So, with this in mind, what are the characteristics that scholars consider to be intrinsic to civil society? Well, the feature of diversity alluded to by Waltzer (above) is central to certain scholarly understandings of civil society. In this view, unlike the market – which tends towards producing dominant designs (Abemathy 1978), and in which context profitability almost always outstrips other criteria for assessing functionality – civil society tends towards unpredictability, is replete with forms and practices that are alternative to the mainstream, and is valued in terms of multiple, divergent notions of functionality (Deakin 2001). A second important feature of civil society that is discussed within the literature relates to the notions of liberty and voluntarism. In this view, unlike the state – which operates according to statutory obligations and the threat of coercive authority – civil society is the arena in which people associate freely with each other, unbounded by such constraints (Deakin 2001). And a third important feature of civil society suggested by scholars is the notion of ‘public good’ that is associated with civil society. According to

this view, it is within the arena of civil society that different perspectives on what is ‘good’, and contending visions of a better world, are dreamt up and worked out (Deakin 2001). In comparison, the market is where these different perspectives and visions are produced and traded, whilst the state regulates them.

Of course, in reality these three arenas (state, market and civil society) are blurred at the margins, inseparably intermeshed throughout, and unfolding dynamically over time and space (Alcock 2010). However, as with the concept of sustainability, I would argue that the element of contestability that inheres within scholarly discussions about civil society is positive in that it holds open a space for enquiry and debate (Jacobs 1999)¹⁹.

With these ideas in mind, I created the following definition of civil society for use within this study:

Civil society is a distinguishable yet inherently open and changeable arena – defined in relation to state and market arenas and always intertwined with them in practice – in which people freely form themselves into groups in order to connect around divergent notions of the public good.

But before moving on to further characterise civil society, a clarification must be briefly made at this point concerning the conceptual relationship between civil society, civil society organisations and social movements; to go into the finer points of this distinction would entail a long and very detailed discussion, as even more has been written about social movements than about civil society. Thus, it will suffice to say that social movements are understood within this thesis to concern the activities, intentions and relationships of people who share a common outlook on society, in so far as they come together in support of specific social goals (Turner 2014). Thus, social movements are likely to originate within civil society, manifesting particular notions of the public good within their campaigns for social change. However, they are not the same as civil society

¹⁹ Though the extent to which this is true within policy debates is questioned by Kendall (2009). See Kendall, J. (2009) ‘Losing political innocence? Finding a place for ideology in understanding the development of recent English third sector policy’, Birmingham: TSRC Working Paper no. 13.

organisations, as social movements may be entirely informal and spontaneous, and are generally understood to cut across and encompass multiple organisations and individuals (Turner 2014).

In terms of characterising civil society in better detail, existing scholarly literatures offer a few different approaches. Mostly, however, they characterise civil society as a sector – broadly equated with the ‘third sector’ (Evers 2013) and sharing many similarities with the ‘non-profit sector’ (Garton 2009) – which is comprised of organised groups (CSOs) and *does not include* individual citizens or families, as they belong to a separate domain of activity (Deakin 2001). Thus, various attempts have been made to understand the internal structuring of the sector in the UK, as well as in other countries.

Academics working in the US, for instance, recently undertook the largest ever international survey of the non-profit sector, in order to produce a substantive understanding of how it is constituted in different developed countries (Salamon and Anheier 1997). Their definition of the sector shares many characteristics with common operational definitions of civil society, but differs in its exclusion of for-profit organisations, such as co-ops and mutuals. As such, it is worth mentioning some of its findings here. Firstly, it reveals that the activities of non-profit organisations (NPOs) are clustered around particular societal issues (e.g. culture and recreation, health, social services and religion). Secondly, it develops an international classification system from this cluster analysis – known as the International Classification of Non-Profit Organisations (ICNPO) – and then measures and compares sectors between national territories. Food is not included in the set of societal issues identified by the ICNPO, but is presumably distributed across several categories.

Overall the usefulness of the ICNPO system for interpreting specific dynamics within the UK sector is limited, as the approach that Salamon and Anheier adopted is somewhat US-centric, and the categories were intended for international comparisons, so are not sensitive to national specificities. Nonetheless, several attempts to explore the structure and other characteristics of civil society have been made that are more UK-centric. In his

recent review of ‘third sector’²⁰ scholarship and debate in the UK, Alcock (2010) found that an institutional architecture of support has developed around civil society, and that this exerts structuring forces on the sector itself. For instance, the large sector associations, such as the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations, have strongly promoted the idea of civil society as crucial to unfolding policy agendas, thereby winning policy support and funding for UK civil society organisations (CSOs) and their activities. However, this support has overwhelmingly favoured the larger, more formalised CSOs, opening up a gap between these ‘insider’ organisations and more grassroots, community-based ‘outsider’ organisations that have been excluded from developments. Another example of the structuring influence of supporting institutions discovered by Alcock is the more long-standing support afforded to CSOs that operate within particular policy fields. This form of support, Alcock argues, is a source of fragmentation and tension across civil society, but of unity within those fields. Perhaps it is also part of the reason for the clustering of activity identified by Salamon and Anheier (1997).

There are ‘endogenous’ reasons for the clustering of activity too. Intrinsic features of CSOs, such as mission and values, and professional identity, seem to strongly influence the shaping of alliances between them. Moreover, in Alcock’s own words, “it is the issues and values of their organisational practice that act most to unify practitioners” (2010: 18). Thus, practitioners working within CSOs commonly have much closer ties within specific issues-based subsectors (such as Housing, Social Care, Environment) than they do within an overarching civil society sector. In the food and farming subsector these issues-based networks and connections have been explored empirically. The Food Issues Census²¹ (Food Ethics Council 2011), described in some detail in CHAPTER 1, was a survey of civil society action on food and farming in the UK (based on a sample of 322 organisations). The survey generated some findings that are of interest within this study. Despite considerable diversity within the food and farming subsector, sustainable development is

²⁰ Alcock’s definition of the third sector is very similar to the definition of civil society used here and his review includes scholarly work about civil society.

²¹ I was directly involved in the design and implementation of this survey, to a limited degree.

a prime concern for the majority of organisations. Organisations within the sector also identify 'common enemies' in the form of government, supermarkets, agribusiness, and food corporations. This is thought to be an important driver of unity within the global sustainable agriculture movement (Buttel 1997). However, the subsector also displays signs of bifurcation along the lines suggested by Alcock, in that resources are consolidated within a relatively small proportion of large, professional organisations, leaving a 'long tail' of small, relatively cash-poor organisations.

So, against a background of diversity and hybridity, the structural characteristics of civil society thus far identified include both: 1) the clustering of activities around societal issues and policy fields (with degrees of overlap), such as food and farming, and 2) the bifurcation of the sector, with the 'top' portion containing organisations that are professionalised, resource-rich policy insiders, and the 'bottom' containing the grassroots, resource-poor policy outsiders. It has also been noted that individuals and organisations identify and associate with others that are from the same issues/policy-based subsectors as themselves – so that the clustering of activities is related to the existence of actual issues/policy-based social networks. Furthermore, the Food Issues Census showed that *within* the food and farming subsector there is significant clustering of activity around issues (most prominent are environment, health, farming and education). This all suggests that the sector is characterised by multiple cross-cutting divides and nested alliances.

A further layer of detail to add to this picture relates to similarities and differences between organisations. The Food Issues Census suggested that there may be significant differences in the strategic focus of CSOs that operate on different scales. Hence, 'service provision' and 'awareness-raising' activities tended to be carried out by small local organisations (e.g. local food partnerships, community supported agriculture and food co-ops); 'education' and 'lobbying' tended to be carried out by medium-sized national organisations (e.g. educational charities and food-and-farming campaign groups); 'activism' tended to be carried out by medium-sized international organisations (e.g. environmental and animal welfare campaign groups); and 'co-ordination and capacity

building’, ‘auditing and business advice’, and ‘research and expert advice’ all tend to be carried out by large international organisations (such as international public health programmes and food accreditation schemes). This interpretation from the survey results was only tentative, based on insufficient data to be considered statistically significant. However, it indicates the existence of a ‘division of labour’ amongst organisations that relates the size and scale of organisations to their strategic focus (in addition to the issues/policy-based social networks mentioned above). Moreover, the study also found that some organisations within the subsector act as ‘hubs’, connecting numerous other organisations to each other through their projects and networks²².

Having gained a reasonable overview of UK civil society and the food and farming subsector, I will briefly consider how individual CSOs develop strategy, and how they interact with other CSOs (for instance, do they co-operate or compete with each other?). Anheier (2000) suggests that the development of strategy in non-profit organisations (NPOs) is complex and contingent upon the trading off of multiple competing ‘bottom lines’. These include the managerial considerations of directors, the motivations of staff, the wider organisational environment, the interests and needs of clients and stakeholders, and the values that underpin the organisations’ mission. Hence, he suggests that NPOs are frequently “several organisations or organisational components in one” (Anheier 2000: 7), and that these components develop their own distinct routines and cultures, and consequently they require different management styles and make different demands on the organisation. He also suggests that attempts to manage this internal complexity give rise to different strategic tendencies within NPOs: whereas ‘palace’ organisations value predictability over improvisation, ‘tent’ organisations value creativity, immediacy and initiative. Palaces tend towards efficiency within stable sets of practices, divisions of labour and evaluative criteria. Tents tend towards effectiveness and flexibility with respect to time-bound and case-specific missions. Within organisations, the different components may be more or less palace-like or tent-like, adding another layer of

²² Two particular organisations – Sustain and The Soil Association – were named as ‘hubs’, both of whom will feature prominently in later chapters.

complexity to non-profit strategy. Other (related) influences on strategy highlighted by Anheier include the extent to which organisations are hierarchical or networked and the extent to which they are inner-directed or outer-directed (i.e. are they more responsive to external shifts or internal developments?).

Thus, NPOs develop strategy by trading off multiple bottom lines related to distinct internal components, and adopting tendencies towards predictability or improvisation, hierarchy or network, inner-direction or outer-direction. But (how) does this influence the ways in which NPOs, and CSOs more generally, interact with each other (e.g. are palace organisations more competitive than tents, or are they more collaborative?). At the current time little research has directly confronted the issues around strategic interactions between CSOs. However, a notable exception is an on-going longitudinal qualitative study that is being carried out by researchers at the Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC) (Macmillan, Arvidson et al. 2011). The TSRC team are conducting a range of case studies of UK organisations and looking into, amongst several other things, the strategies that Third Sector Organisations (TSOs) use to negotiate their organisational environments, and the interactions that they have with other organisations. Although the authors have yet to publish any conclusive findings from this part of the research, a working paper about the methods used in the project does highlight some relevant points and suggest some theoretical directions.

For instance, the authors suggest that TSOs receive mixed messages from their funding environments about whether to compete or collaborate with each other. They develop this idea, along with other observations about the nature of third sector work, to suggest a novel way of conceptualising TSO agency. Adapting Bourdieu's field theory, they develop the term 'room' as a way of describing what it is that TSOs are striving for when they alternately compete or collaborate with each other. In the words of the TSRC project leader, Rob Macmillan:

"Boldly stated, if the 'bottom line' is primarily profit in the private sector, it may be 'room' for the third sector. In this view room would act as a fundamental, often

unstated, assumption and concern of participants in third sector groups and organisations.” (Macmillan 2011: 23)

It seems to me that the distinction made here is about the singularity of ‘profit’ as a desired outcome of activity, in comparison to the plurality of desired outcomes that usually motivate CSO activity. Hence, ‘room’ is a shorthand for the trade-offs that have to be made by CSOs that are seeking to exert agency over time (i.e. drive change) in the face of multiple divergent demands on their resources and multiple different ways of valuing their performance (Anheier 2000, see below). To exert agency under this view, CSOs must ‘make room’ for themselves within their surrounding environments by navigating complicated trade-offs between different kinds of concerns.

In Bourdieu’s theory, strategic behaviour is of paramount importance for explaining interactions between individuals, and relationships between agency and social structures (including both intentional and non-intentional or ‘embodied’ strategies). Likewise for Macmillan, TSOs are strategic in how they position themselves with respect to each other, so that their interactions are always influenced by their concern about ‘room’ – whether they make room for themselves through competitive or collaborative strategies. At the very least, TSO strategies must concern what is to be done, with whom, for how long, and where (Macmillan 2011: 19). The way that they position themselves, and the room that they make, will reflect these things. However, strategies may not be made explicit, nor may they be consensual or particularly stable. In fact, for Macmillan:

“Strategies are not necessarily the formal written documents often produced by third sector organisations seeking to look ahead every three or five years. They can just as much be informal, implicit, opaque and contested. They might not even be labelled as such.”(Macmillan 2011: 12)

Moreover, he states that:

“Intuitive, routine and habitual practices are strategic inasmuch as they are oriented to a surrounding context, even if they remain unarticulated, unchallenged and implicit.” (Macmillan 2011: 28)

Furthermore, agreeing with Anheier (2000) cited above, Macmillan points out that TSOs are not singular and may be made up of distinct components. Thus, he suggests that these different components within an organisation are likely to be engaged in strategies to position themselves and their projects with respect to each other, as well as with respect to external actors. He goes further still by suggesting that multi-organisational alliances might also have distinctive strategies for positioning themselves. Thus, strategies may exist at the level of intra-organisational fields (populated by components within organisations), inter-organisational fields (populated by organisations) and super-organisational fields (populated by multi-organisational alliances). This way of viewing TSOs, and by extension CSOs, draws attention to the shared social worlds – or ‘fields’ – within which they operate. It also suggests that civil society actors – whether they are components, organisations or alliances – have different specific interests (despite sharing common concerns, such as relating to food) and are differently empowered to each other, and that this is crucial to their development of strategy.

However, it is important not to lose sight of the dynamics unfolding within wider environments that structure these interactions. Trends and events shape public and policy discourses in ways that influence the interests of CSOs, as well as the availability of resources and other components of empowerment. Thus, for Macmillan, CSO strategies are developed through interactions that take place within a dynamic external landscape (or ‘social world’ in Bourdieuan terminology), which has an unevenly contoured terrain that favours some strategies over others. In other words, the landscape is ‘strategically selective’. But Macmillan is clear that the relationship between organisational strategies and external landscapes, or agency and structure, goes both ways. If landscape dynamics create constraints that favour some strategies over others, organisations can engage in

‘strategic learning’ and action that enables them to reposition their strategies so that they a) fit better with existing dynamics and b) influence existing dynamics in ways that favour their strategies better.

“Actors monitor the consequences of their actions, including assessing the success or failure of previous and existing strategies. In doing so actors learn about barriers, enabling factors, constraints and opportunities. Hence the model is recursive as strategic action is then reformulated on the basis of learning and a changing context.” (Macmillan 2011: 28)

3.2.1 Summary

The existing scholarly literatures have several things to say about civil society, and I have a few things to say about them (the literatures) too. Firstly, civil society as an arena (or ‘sector’) is primarily constituted by the activity of organised groups of people (CSOs)²³. Secondly, scholars have shown that there are some identifiable structures and patterns within civil society. For instance, the sector as a whole is characterised by some degree of bifurcation, with the ‘top’ portion containing more of the professionalised, resource-rich, policy-insider organisations, and the ‘bottom’ containing mostly grassroots, resource-poor, policy-outsider organisations. However, the identification of this pattern has not led to a substantive analysis of power relations within the sector. Indeed, I found the issues of power and agency to be underrepresented in the literatures on civil society, seldom discussed and then only implicitly, e.g. in Macmillan’s discussion of strategic behaviour.

Another identifiable pattern is that activity within the sector is partly disaggregated into several subsectors and social networks that are associated with societal issues/policy fields (i.e. thematic spheres of action), such as food and farming, culture and recreation, social care, health, environment, and so on. Moreover, within each of these fields there may be social networks associated with the other fields (e.g. within food and farming

²³ I had not thought to mention this up until now, as it is not a matter of debate in the literature. In fact it seems to be presumed by many scholars. However, it seems non-trivial to me that civil society is made up of organised groups of people rather than isolated individuals.

there may be a culture and recreation network, a social care network, a health network, etc.). The resulting structure is therefore somewhat 'fractal' with 'self-similar' patterns emerging at different nested levels. Although 'scale' of organisation is another issue that is not addressed directly within the literatures on civil society, it is clear that civil society is characterised by organisation at multiple scales, ranging from the sector as a whole, down through subsector issue/policy fields, social networks within these fields, organisations (within networks), component parts within organisations, and – though not mentioned here – individual people within organisations who may even be said to comprise multiple selves (Tajfel and Turner 1979).

Thirdly, there are important axes of similarity and difference between (and within) CSOs, in terms of their strategic focus and approach to managing internal complexity. All CSOs are made up of multiple internal components, which they have to trade off against each other when they develop strategy. However, they adopt different tendencies in the ways that they do this, e.g. towards predictability or improvisation (palace/tent), hierarchy or network, and inner-direction or outer-direction. In addition, within the field of food and farming, CSOs of different size and scale of operations have been found to engage in distinctly different sets of activities. However, the relationship between these sets of activities and the strategic tendencies of CSOs is left open to speculation. For instance, it seems logical that large international organisations that carry out 'co-ordination and capacity building', 'auditing and business advice', and/or 'research and expert advice' would tend towards predictability and hierarchy (i.e. making them 'palace-like'). In contrast, it seems likely that the 'long tail' of grassroots, community-based, policy-outsider organisations would be more 'tent-like'. However, the validity of these hypotheses remains to be empirically tested.

Finally, the literature suggests that civil society actors – whether they are components of organisations, single organisations or multi-organisational alliances – position themselves with respect to each other in order to make room for themselves within dynamic external landscapes that are strategically selective. And, by doing so, they both learn about and influence their environments, adapting their strategic positions accordingly. Thus, over

time their strategies – concerning what they do, who they do it with, and when and where they do it – are subject to change. This recursive account of the relations between civil society actors, their strategies, and the dynamic external landscapes within which they position themselves seems to be the closest thing to a model of agency and structure from within the civil society literature. Beyond this, I found that scholars of civil society do not make much use of frameworks that explain societal level change processes.

3.3 Food systems

Given that contemporary food systems are not only characterised by a wide array of different (overlapping and interpenetrating) processes, but they also operate in every cultural and political context, across space and over time, without fixed boundaries, and (critically) they may be represented in a multitude of different possible ways, I argued in the introduction against treating them too rigidly. And since, at its heart, this study concerns not only the ostensible facts of what civil society actors do and the consequences of their actions for food systems, but it also concerns their intentions – i.e. the values, meanings and interpretations that they ascribe to their actions, to the consequences and to food systems – to proscribe certain understandings of food systems and rule out others could impose unhelpful limits on the study. For a start, it might restrict my ability, as an analyst, to recognise and understand the relevance of phenomena that are framed in ways that do not fit with the specific systematisations created by scholars. And secondly, having already adopted one framework – the MLP from the sustainability transitions literature – another may confuse things.

So, in the framing of this study I will strive, as far as possible, to treat food systems openly, so that I can trace interactions between different scales, and so that a plurality of interpretations can be investigated. I will, as explained in the introduction, apply one considerable empirical limitation to the study that will undoubtedly influence how food systems are configured herein, i.e. by focussing on *UK-based organisations* and the roles that they play in transitions towards the sustainability of food systems *within the UK*. Other than this, no attempt will be made to define a single, ostensibly transcendent,

notion of what constitutes ‘a’ or ‘the’ ‘food system’, and no definitive structures or boundaries will be imposed on what is and is not included as relevant.

For instance, the study will not zoom in, a priori, on a particular industrial subsector, supply chain or market. It will not be concerned only with production, or only with consumption, per se. It will not limit its focus to a single societal issue, such as ‘genetic modification’ or ‘obesity’, ignoring others²⁴. It will not rule out activities that serve multiple purposes or cut across other regimes (i.e. of healthcare, or housing, or recreation, and so on). Instead, this study will ‘follow the (civil society) actors’ by taking their own (often divergent) accounts of food systems seriously (Latour 1987). It will situate the different framings of food systems that are offered by different actors in relation to them, and ground each analysis in its empirical context.

That said, there are two areas of existing scholarship that are relevant to the empirical context of this study²⁵, and which I may seek to draw on as I discuss my findings in later chapters. First, over the past few decades a considerable literature that investigates social and technological change in food systems has emerged from interactions between political scientists, geographers and historians. Some scholars who have adopted this approach – which is sometimes known as Regime Analysis (McMichael 2009b) – use concepts that are similar to some of those mentioned above. In particular, they write about food ‘regimes’ or ‘paradigms’ and ‘transition’ or ‘regime shift’, and have produced a variety of accounts that document the rise and fall of dominant food regimes and paradigms throughout history²⁶ (Friedmann 1993, Buttel 1997, Magdoff, Buttel et al. 1998, Lang and Heasman 2004, Scrinis 2007, McMichael 2009a, Marsden 2012, Ethical Consumer No date). However, for the reasons just related, I believe that it is not

²⁴ Though of course the concept of sustainability, defined for the purpose of this study in the introduction, does act as a filter of some sort, albeit it relatively broad one.

²⁵ Comparatively little attention has been paid to food systems by scholars of sustainability transitions. Nonetheless, transitions perspectives are discussed within CHAPTER 4.

²⁶ They also attribute an important role in change processes to certain kinds of civil society actors: social movements and movement organisations. For them, social movements give voice to tensions in declining regimes and make promises about alternative, emerging regimes. However, in these accounts, the ultimate power of social movements is understood to be mediated by incumbent regime interests, which are seen as highly adaptive.

necessary, at the outset of this study, to elaborate further on the generalised features of particular food regimes as they are described in this literature. I certainly don't plan to operationalise them.

However, a seemingly more relevant (but closely related) branch of scholarship to emerge from interactions between (largely) geographers and rural sociologists is the literature on Alternative Food Networks (AFNs), which has developed over the past two decades (Ilbery and Kneafsey 2000, Hinrichs 2003). In contrast to the literature on food regimes which tends to be highly theorised, the large number of pre-existing papers associated with the AFN concept provide 'thick descriptions' of a range of different configurations of sustainable food provisioning, including fair trade supply chains, organic certification systems, consumer buying groups, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) schemes, and other forms of direct marketing and localised food systems (Little, Maye et al. 2010). This literature shows how many of the organisational forms of AFNs have existed for several decades at the margins of the food economy, where, by-and-large, they started out as institutional innovations quite separate from mainstream systems (Goodman and Goodman 2009), with significant, though not exclusive, civil society involvement. It also traces the processes by which, in the last few decades, some AFNs have grown to occupy significant market niches and inhabit shelf-space in large-scale retail outlets (though this trend has partially reversed in the UK since the financial crash of 2008).

Having said that the literature on AFNs is not highly theorised, it has nonetheless provided a central thesis about how these networks came about. Under this view, the establishment and proliferation of AFNs has arisen in response to a recent shift in the way that food is valued by certain kinds of consumers – where diverse notions of quality, instead of price, have become the prime basis for competition (Goodman and Goodman 2009: 2). For AFN scholars, this 'turn to quality' is bound up with both the transition to post-Fordism in the food industry (Renard 2003), and with a crisis of confidence amongst higher-income consumers over the safety, nutritional value, and social and environmental sustainability of industrial food (Goodman, 2009). In relation to accounts provided by regime analysts, they argue that whereas quantity and price drove food policy and

markets under the post-war productivist regime (Lang and Heasman 2004), notions of quality have driven the development of a variety of highly differentiated food provisioning systems since then.

AFN scholars have also shown that, by participating in AFNs, food producers, consumers and activists have given rise to institutional innovations in provisioning systems that oppose the industrial logics of incumbent food regimes (Goodman 2009). Hence, those who create and participate in AFNs are variously described as being against, in opposition to, or countering industrial food. However, AFN scholars have also shown that not all AFN advocates are intentionally striving to overthrow mainstream food systems. They may simply be seeking to create alternative systems that can coexist alongside them. Either way, they are seeking to create systems that contain countermeasures to the pitfalls of the industrial food regime and they do this through (1) the redistribution of value, which is consolidated around the retail part of industrial food supply chains; (2) the reestablishment of trust in producer-consumer relations, which has been lost as a result of successive food scares in industrial systems; and (3) innovative forms of governance and political collective action, which are absent in industrial food chains. All of these are shown to be common objectives pursued within AFNs (Whatmore, Stassart et al. 2003).

The implications of AFN's with respect to mainstream food systems have been portrayed in different ways in the literature, ranging from AFNs as agents of radical revolutionary change to AFNs as representing incremental reforms. In North America, the dominant mode of conceptualising AFNs has been as "bearers of transformative political change" (Goodman 2003: 2). As a corollary they have been evaluated by American scholars for their potential to overturn hegemonic industrial food systems through political activism (Hassanein 2003, Whatmore, Stassart et al. 2003). However, European scholars, influenced by contemporaneous policy developments, have instead tended to view AFNs as "exemplars of an alternative institutional model of rural development" (Goodman 2003: 2), suggesting a non-adversarial role for AFNs in a more incremental transition to sustainability. In terms of the view from the UK, British authors publishing in the AFN literature and using UK case studies have adopted a range of positions between the

European and North American stances, focusing sometimes on their capacity to facilitate changes in the policy landscape (e.g. Morgan 2010), and at other times on the transformative potential of civil society groups in their own right (e.g. Little, Maye et al. 2010).

These differences in perspective aside, AFNs have been shown by scholars from both sides of the Atlantic to engage a wide range of different types of actors in struggles to control socio-technical developments within food systems. And since AFN research tends to be relatively well-attuned to power relations, and focused on the interactions between AFNs and dominant actors in the food system, this has led to a preoccupation within the literature with notions of integrity and empowerment. Within AFN case studies, the characteristics of AFNs that have managed to maintain a high level of integrity are compared with those that have lost integrity, usually as a by-product of interacting with industrial food systems (in some cases the network itself becomes inseparably intermeshed with industrial systems, whereas in others AFN practices are applied to industrial food chains). Some of these characteristics, gathered from various AFN case studies (Hassanein 2003, Hinrichs 2003, Renard 2003, Guthman 2004, Little, Maye et al. 2010, Morgan 2010, Hutchens 2011), are summarised in Table 2 below. The right hand columns provide empirical examples of AFNs that have embodied them to different degrees (high and low). The examples given are extremes, but this reflects the way that they are generally treated in the literature; as alternately radical or reforming.

However, in a recent special issue devoted to the topic of civil society involvement in AFNs, Renting et al. (2012) argue that AFN scholars have overly focussed their attention on the role of producers in AFNs, at the expense of consumers and citizens. According to them, “the role of civil society as a governance mechanism for agri-food networks has increased in significance compared to market and state actors” (Renting, Schermer et al. 2012: 289); hence, in their view, existing theoretical approaches based on the AFN concept cannot adequately address this shift in practice. Specifically, they point to relatively new initiatives in which consumer-citizens, rather than producers, are the main initiators and operators of AFNs, such as consumer co-operatives, local and/or organic

buying groups, and community-based gardening groups. They call these networks Civic Food Networks (CFNs), to distinguish them from the dominantly producer-led AFNs considered by scholars previously. Moreover, they suggest that CFNs are associated with a wider range of social, cultural, political and environmental meanings than the AFN concept suggests, and tend to be normatively driven (cf. merely ‘alternative’)²⁷.

On this note, they follow Sonnino and Marsden (2006) in suggesting that CFNs should be conceptualised as “‘hybrid’ networks that combine elements of alternative and mainstream food networks as part of ongoing, incomplete transition processes” (Renting, Schermer et al. 2012: 292). So, in order to better understand the different meanings that are produced by the altered relationships between civil society, state and market actors in CFNs, they use the three-sector model (Paton 2009) discussed in section 3.2. Under what they call “dominant agri-food governance mechanisms”, civil society involvement is framed in terms of passivity, i.e. as consumer choice, price-taking (farmers), and voting. However, under civil society based governance – as practiced in CFNs – they argue that civil society involvement can be framed actively, in terms of building capacities, social learning and creating “space to manoeuvre” (Renting, Schermer et al. 2012: 298). And in their view, a more active role for civil society with profoundly changed food systems is highly desirable. Hence, they welcome the “highly diverse forms of civic engagement” and “transformative potential” heralded by the emergence of CFNs (Renting, Schermer et al. 2012: 299).

²⁷ Nonetheless, they also note – in keeping with the AFN concept – that definitions of sustainability and food quality performance within CFNs are clearly distinct from conventional food systems.

Table 2. Characteristics of AFNs, with examples to illustrate consequences for integrity/empowerment

Characteristics of AFNs	Extent to which they are embodied <i>High</i> <i>Low</i>	
Separation from mainstream The degree of operational and financial 'separateness' of the network from mainstream, industrial food channels	Fair-trade pioneers	Fair-trade labelling
Redistribution of power The extent to which power in the food system is redistributed by network activities	Alternative food brands and direct marketing	Labelling on conventional brands
Enactment of change The extent to which changes to existing market systems or consumer habits are enacted – not just demanded rhetorically	Organic buying groups	Organic certification
Dissimilarity to industrial models The degree of disparity between the organisational form of the network and the industrial model	Communitarian civic food initiatives	Centrally-coordinated networks
Connection to related issues and orgs The extent to which the network connects issues together and harmonises its approach with other organisations and networks, rather than addressing a marketable 'single issues'	Food policy councils and strategies	Carbon labelling/air-freight labelling
Institutionalisation The extent to which the values and practices of the network have been institutionalised within the public sector	Campaigns to reform school food	Voluntary industry schemes
Receptivity to diversity The extent to which the narratives of change that circulate in the network are diversity-receptive, or (in contrast) defensive; do they reinforce or undermine divisions?	Inter-local food movements	Attempts to preserve local cuisines and cultures
Symbolic and cultural effects The extent to which the network generates new 'self-conscious' food cultures and challenges traditional identities of producer and consumer	Community dining events	Ethical produce in conventional outlets

3.4 Conclusions

In this chapter I provided a broad-ranging review of the principal academic literatures that engage with the real world problems I'm seeking to address in this study. I did so with the aim of conceptually underpinning and situating the thesis with respect to current scholarly debates. First, I explored the Sustainability Transitions literature, which provides frameworks for understanding the processes involved in large scale and long-ranging change towards sustainability, or 'transitions'. Second, I considered how scholarly literatures on civil society engage with the problems of structure and agency with respect to the category of actors at the heart of this enquiry – civil society organisations (CSOs). And third, I reflected on contemporary food systems, particularly the novel configurations of sustainable food provisioning known by scholars from Geography and Rural Sociology as Alternative Food Networks (AFNs), paying attention to how they have been studied and represented within the AFN literature.

In summary, what I learned about *transitions* is that they unfold on multiple levels, involve multiple actors, generate different scales and rates of change, and may lead in several different directions, each with different consequences for the empowerment of the actors involved. Whereas the seeds of more sustainable systems emerge within *niches*, their ability to replace incumbent socio-technical *regimes* is dependent on the *destabilisation* of those regimes. Resulting from the interaction between endogenous and exogenous pressures, destabilisation is driven both from *within* incumbent regimes and from *the outside*, involving state, market and civil society actors alike. If driven predominantly from within incumbent regimes, the result is likely to be *incremental reform*, but if driven from the outside the result is likely to be *more radical change*. Highly dependent on the alignment of factors operating at different levels, transitions may stop and start, grind to a halt, skip phases, or recursively cycle through the same phases.

I also learned that scholars, who originally studied historical transitions, focussing on the co-evolution of different factors over time, are increasingly studying incomplete and prospective transitions. In this context, the above observation that transitions generate

different scales and rates of change becomes increasingly relevant, and eschews the equation of change with the passing of time, which is how the MLP represents it. Thus, in this study I will subtly reinterpret the MLP, replacing 'time' on the X axis with a qualitative measure of 'transformation' – i.e. indicating the degree to which the incumbent regime is transformed through the processes of transition.

Moving on, I learned about a number of studies and debates that promise to shed light on the nature and structure of the civil society sector in the UK and the behaviour of CSOs. Crucially, I learned that civil society is a contested concept with various historical connotations that has been used rhetorically for political reasons. Nonetheless, I also learned that it has endured through use as an analytical category to describe a sector of society that is distinct (at least conceptually) from state and market sectors, and which some believe has its own unique properties and internal structures. Moreover, I learned that analytical definitions of CSOs share certain properties in common – such as being non-profit distributing, independently governed, and serving the public good in some way or other. And finally, I learned that CSOs themselves may have characteristic internal structures and behaviours, though these are not well understood. I have summarised some of the most relevant points from this discussion in Table 3 below.

And finally, I learned that contemporary food systems are incredibly complex, unbounded, and subject to a plurality of interpretations and representations. And although I found that scholars have attempted to schematise dominant patterns in food provisioning at different times, I decided not to operationalise them in this study for fear of unhelpfully closing down the analysis in ways that could have undesired consequences. Nonetheless, I took note of one particular account of contemporary food system dynamics that links a recent turn towards quality (over quantity) in the way that certain kinds of consumers are valuing food to the emergence of a range of institutional innovations in food provisioning (i.e. AFNs). Moreover, I found that these AFNs are characterised by significant, though not exclusive, civil society involvement. I also found that the people involved are commonly motivated by a wide range of normative concerns – for instance regarding the

redistribution of value and re-establishment of trust in food systems – which they address by adopting innovative forms of governance and political collective action within AFNs.

Table 3. Summary of statements about civil society and CSOs, indicating their sources

Statement	Source
The sector as a whole is characterised by some degree of bifurcation into a professionalised, resource-rich, policy-insider ‘top’ portion of organisations, and a ‘bottom’ portion containing mostly grassroots, resource-poor, policy-outsider organisations.	Alcock (2010)
Activity within the sector is partly disaggregated into several subsectors and social networks that are associated with societal issues/policy fields, such as food and farming.	Salamon and Anheier (1997); Alcock (2010)
Within each of these fields there may be social networks associated with the other fields. The result is a nested structure of networks.	Food Ethics Council (2011)
All CSOs are made up of multiple internal components.	Anheier (2000)
CSOs develop tendencies in the way they manage internal complexity, i.e. towards predictability or improvisation (palace/tent), hierarchy or network, and inner-direction or outer-direction.	Anheier (2000)
CSOs position themselves with respect to each other in order to make room for themselves within dynamic external landscapes that are strategically selective; their strategies – concerning what they do, who they do it with, and when and where they do it – are subject to change over time.	Macmillan (2011)
These strategies may exist at intra-, inter- and super-organisational levels.	Macmillan (2011)

In the next chapter (CHAPTER 4) I will conduct an in-depth review of specific sections of the sustainability transitions literature that relate directly to the roles that civil society actors play within sustainability transitions. From this review, I will create the typology of roles that I introduced in CHAPTER 1.

CHAPTER 4. Theoretical framework

As stated in the introduction, this study is not concerned with evaluating the extent to which sustainability is achieved, but with what specific changes are being striven for, how this striving is done, and the observable consequences for the actors involved. Thus, in this chapter I will consider what distinguishable kinds of roles civil society actors play as they strive for change towards sustainability in food systems. I will interrogate what I have previously called the ‘systemic view’ adopted by scholars from the field of sustainability transitions (i.e. which – as I will show – gives rise to theoretically defined, functional roles), so that it will be possible for me to compare this with the actor-level views that I will generate through my own empirical research (i.e. empirically constructed and self-defined roles). However, it is worth mentioning right away that, despite the often assumed singularity of the framework that currently stands at the centre of this field – i.e. the Multi-level Perspective (MLP) – the literature actually offers a multiplicity of interpretations of it and the roles of different actors within it. Hence, my aim is to scrutinise this literature and, metaphorically speaking, sediment out the principal roles in transition ascribed to civil society within the MLP and related frameworks.

From the outset I anticipate that these ‘roles in transition’, described by scholars from the field, are more than just the activities that organisations pursue, or the strategies that they adopt. For, although these may be central to scholarly understandings of the roles that CSOs play in transition, they are not the only factors. In order to play a role in transitions to sustainability – which are, by definition, long-term, multi-dimensional, and fundamental transformation processes – the strategic activities of CSOs must not only possess certain endogenous characteristics, but they must also catalyse, engage and influence wider niche, regime and landscape processes. For transitions scholars, exogenous factors are important and ‘roles in transition’ can only be understood with respect to the overarching processes that drive transition.

As suggested in the introduction, the literature on sustainability transitions has generated a range of concepts and a few relevant frameworks that relate to the specific roles that civil society actors play within broad processes of change towards sustainability. Perhaps one of the most overt attempts to codify these roles was made by Smith (2012) in his mapping of civil society activity in sustainable electricity transitions (see Figure 6 below). In this paper, he distinguished between civil society activities that relate to three sets of transition processes – i.e. 1) civil society activities that are niche-oriented, 2) those that seek to unsettle incumbent regimes, and 3) those that help constitute landscape pressures for change. Although this exercise is thought provoking and novel, Smith acknowledges that it does not go into any explanatory detail and fails to unpack the connections that he identifies in a substantive way. In his words:

“Whilst such mapping is useful, it is only a first step. It merely serves to re-frame civil society activities in relation to multi-level transition processes. An advantage might be that it generates new discussions about the roles and consequences of different civil association strategies. But deeper analysis is then needed to understand how these linkages actually work over time, and with what consequences for sustainability transitions.” (Smith 2012)

Smith’s mapping only describes the sets of activities related to the first two of these in any detail and even then it only draws on a thin cross-section of his own empirical work, failing to go deeper by looking across the full range of existing studies into the roles of civil society in transitions. Moreover, Smith’s schema does not adequately reflect the range of roles identified by other scholars (as I will show), and is specific to the electricity sector, so may not reflect the forms of action that are particular to the food and farming sector. Hence, referring back to Smith’s own comment, it is this deeper work – at least in terms of reviewing the relevant literature – which I now intend to do. But rather than using Smith’s schema as a ‘base map’ and proceeding to fill in the details, I will instead review relevant sections of the transitions literature ‘afresh’. From this new basis, I will then come up with a typology of roles that is at once grounded in the broad dynamics of transition

unfolding within the food and farming sector, and which also reflects various different scholarly understandings of sustainability transitions.

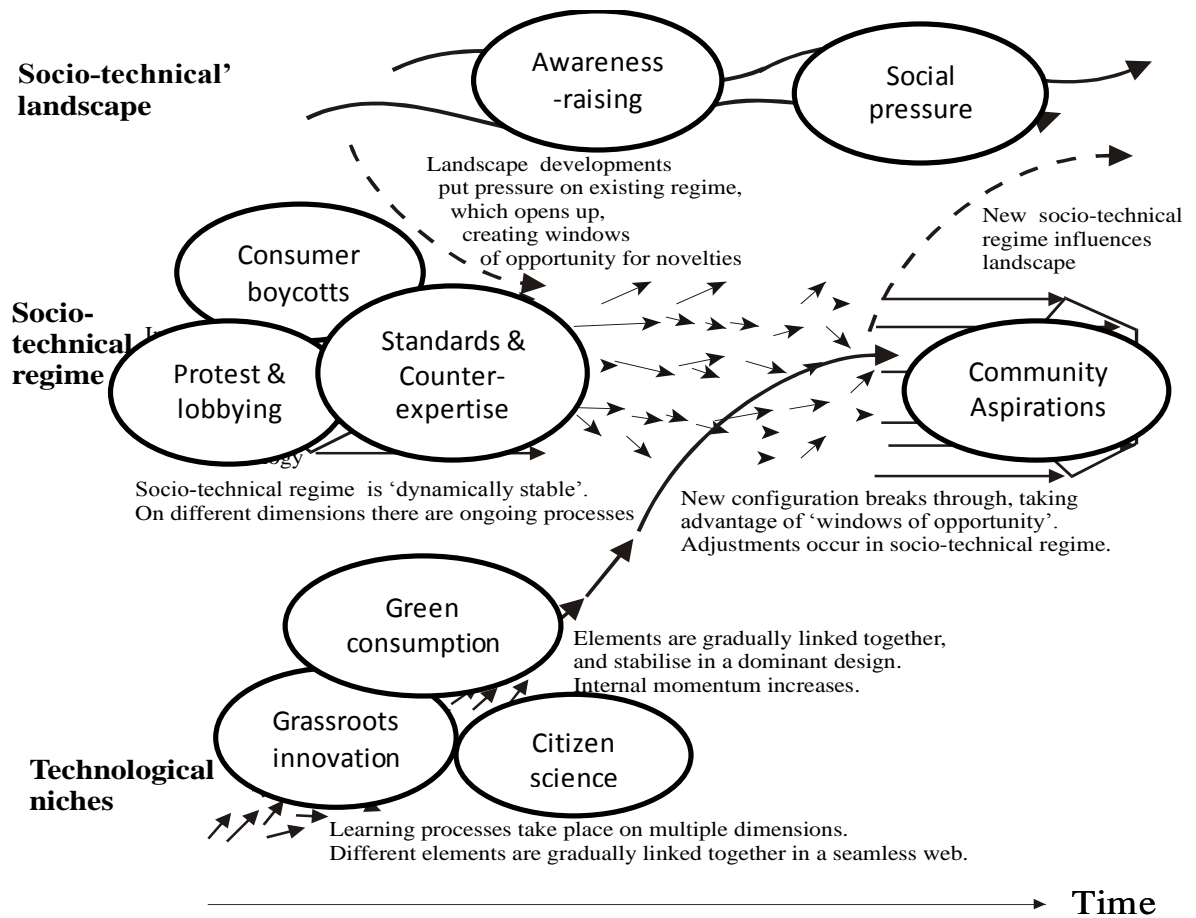


Figure 6. Civil society activity in sustainable electricity transitions, Smith (2012)

4.1 Niche-oriented roles

4.1.1 Grassroots Innovations

Seyfang and Smith coined the term 'grassroots innovations' (Seyfang and Smith 2007) in response to their observation that attempts made by various 'grassroots' actors (which they define as groups of committed activists that operate in civil society arenas) to drive change towards sustainability were generating "a variety of social innovations as well as innovative technologies – new organisational arrangements and new tools" (p.584). They noticed that, despite widespread attention from academics and policymakers, few people were conceiving of 'grassroots action' as innovative in the context of societal challenges,

such as sustainability. Examples of this kind of grassroots action given by Seyfang and Smith range from “furniture-recycling social enterprises to organic gardening cooperatives, low impact housing developments, farmers’ markets and community composting schemes”. They claim that these activities represent “novel bottom-up solutions for sustainable development; solutions that respond to the local situation and the interests and values of the communities involved” (p.585). They call these solutions ‘grassroots innovations’.

Seyfang and Smith also offer an explanation of how civil society gives rise to these new, more sustainable organisational arrangements and activities. According to them, grassroots innovations emerge within civil society ‘niches’. Like the technological niches described in the previous chapter, they protect fledgling innovations from full exposure to the cognitive, social, economic, institutional and technological selection pressures that constrains innovation within incumbent regimes. However, civil society niches differ in important ways from market niches (see Table 4 below), in which protection is offered by the state through the granting of tax breaks and subsidies. Instead, civil society provides an arena in which protective niche spaces can be formed by networks of organisations, activists and ethical consumers, because the rules for valuing innovations in these civil society networks are different from the profit-driven imperatives of the market. Thus, operating within civil society, grassroots innovations are valued for a variety of different reasons, including their capacity to respond to environmental, social and personal needs, and realise other divergently construed notions of the public good. Moreover, this form of protection, offered by civil society niches, may be either passive (e.g. arising from the existence of a local pool of consumers who are willing to pay more for sustainable produce) or active (e.g. arising from deliberate, strategic support measures such as co-operative financing of sustainable food outlets) (Smith and Raven 2012).

Another contrast with market niches is that the technologies involved in grassroots innovations are usually far from being entirely new inventions, at least from a purely technological perspective. As a form of ‘social innovation’, however, novelty occurs at the level of social practice, rather than technological artefact (Howaldt, Schwarz et al. 2010).

Hence, grassroots innovations are often developed, deployed, appreciated and governed in unusual socio-technical configurations and contexts (p.588), and the social networks of organisations and activists involved in creating these configurations are as important as the activities and technologies themselves (Verheul and Vergragt 1995).

Table 4. Market-based and grassroots innovations compared, adapted from Seyfang and Smith (2007: 592)

Characteristic	Market-based innovations	Grassroots innovations
Driving force	Profit	Public good (divergently construed)
Niche functioning	Tax and subsidies temporarily shelter novelty from full force of market	Alternative social and cultural values are expressed within the niche, e.g. environmentalism
Organisational forms	Firms	CSOs, i.e. diverse range of organisational types, including voluntary associations, co-ops, and informal groups
Resource base	Income from commercial activity	Grant funding, voluntary input, mutual exchange, income from commercial activity
Novelty	Technology/product	Social configuration and context of deployment

With respect to the capacity of grassroots innovations to drive change towards sustainability in food systems more broadly (i.e. beyond the protected space of innovative niches), Seyfang and Smith suggest that there are two main mechanisms for this. Firstly, through direct environmental and social benefits arising from people's ad-hoc participation in activities organised by grassroots food groups ('direct benefits'). And secondly, through intentionally creating alternative (parallel) systems that have the capacity to endure over time, grow in scale and numbers, and influence or even replace parts of incumbent regimes ('diffusion benefits'). However, the extent to which either mechanism is realised in practice is an empirical question; a recent study that construed local food projects in the UK as grassroots innovations revealed many direct benefits of the activity but a lack of diffusion benefits or impacts on the wider food supply chain

(Kirwan, Ilbery et al. 2013). In particular, they found that these projects made significant contributions “in terms of enabling projects, communities and individuals to build capacity at a local level to help develop social agency” (p.7). Another recent study that looked at grassroots innovations in the UK community energy sector revealed a similar picture (Hargreaves, Hielscher et al. 2013), raising the important point made by Seyfang and Smith: although some grassroots organisations and networks have a strategic intention to affect regime change through diffusion, some don’t (2007: 593). Nonetheless, it can be assumed *by definition* that all grassroots innovations have both the intention and the potential to drive change directly.

Although they provide vivid and detailed descriptions of both grassroots innovations and civil society niches (Seyfang and Smith 2007: 585), Seyfang and Smith do not provide a clear conceptualisation of either, nor do they stipulate where the boundaries lie between the two concepts. Hence, I’ve attempted to bring a little more clarity to the relationship between the two concepts by defining them as follows:

Grassroots innovations are novel, more sustainable configurations of actors, organisational arrangements, technologies and practices that are usually created within the protective spaces of civil society niches, and which respond to local situations and the interests and values of the communities involved.

Civil society niches are protected spaces, formed by networks of civil society organisations and activists, in which grassroots innovations can be (but are not always) developed and valued for their capacity to address societal issues and/or realise divergently construed notions of the public good.

Moreover, in order to make the concept of grassroots innovations operational in my study of civil society organisations, I have further defined three core characteristics, drawn from the literature cited above. These are to be thought of as characteristics displayed by organisations playing the role of grassroots innovation in transitions to sustainability.

*(1) **Novelty:** the organisation applies novel socio-technical arrangements and tools. Though they are far from being entirely new 'inventions', these arrangements and tools often display novelty at the level of technical, social and cognitive practices, i.e. in terms of how they are developed, deployed, appreciated and governed, in comparison to those arrangements and tools that are common within incumbent food regimes.*

*(2) **Responsiveness:** the organisation's activities are framed in response to its local situation and the interests or values of those involved. It is therefore 'rooted' to its particular context and is capable of generating direct sustainability benefits in its locality.*

*(3) **Protection:** the organisation enjoys a degree of 'shielding' from full exposure to regime selection pressures. This may be the result of people valuing the organisation according to alternative measures, such as the extent to which it addresses divergent notions of the public good, e.g. safety, nutritional value, social and environmental sustainability.*

According to Seyfang and Smith, a further characteristic of grassroots innovations that was not mentioned above is that they are frequently beset by challenges from within and from without (Seyfang and Smith 2007: 595-8). Learning how to overcome these difficulties is the core concern of another branch of the sustainability transitions literature, Strategic Niche Management (SNM).

4.1.2 Niche development

The literature on Strategic Niche Management investigates the transformative potential of radical socio-technical niches in the context of change towards sustainability. In a review of the SNM literature, Schot and Geels (2008) capture the essence of this research agenda by asking the question '[under what conditions] can radical sustainable innovations be nurtured in niche experiments such that they develop and diffuse to disrupt the regime?' An important framing assumption behind this is that technological niches can grow in size to become either true (i.e. unprotected) market niches, which can in turn eventually overtake mainstream technology markets in size and influence, or, according to an

alternative account, emerging 'niche-regimes' (Avelino and Rotmans 2009), that subsequently 'attack' and take over from incumbent regimes.

In attempting to address this question, 'early' SNM research focussed on internal niche processes, whereas 'later' research looked into the relationships between niches and the dynamics unfolding within wider environments. Summarising this 'early' work, Schot and Geels (2008) list some of the factors that have proven to be requirements of successful niche management, or 'steering from within': the articulation of visions for the future, building of social networks, project-level learning processes, global niche-level learning processes (see below), and involvement of outsiders. The additional insights of 'later' SNM work reflect the influence of the MLP in the sustainability transitions field. Hence, it emphasised the importance of interactions between processes unfolding at the niche, regime and landscape levels. For instance, changes in landscape dynamics might lead to the re-framing of norms and rules within the regime, which (under certain conditions) could open up windows of opportunity for the diffusion of radical niche innovations by destabilising the capacity of incumbent regime technologies to perform in markets.

In the words of Schot and Geels (2008):

"While SNM research provides evidence that there is a correlation between the design of experiments and outcomes in terms of technological and market niche development, it is also clear that internal niche developments are not the only important factor. External factors also play a crucial role. Niche innovations are rarely able to bring about regime transformation without the help of broader forces and processes."

Nonetheless, a central contribution of SNM towards understanding niche-based innovation is encapsulated in the distinction made by Geels and Raven (2006) between locally situated 'niche experiments' (projects) and the 'global niche level'. This is illustrated in Figure 7 below, which shows how situated projects relate to each other and the global niche level, and, in turn, how these relationships stimulate the development of an emerging technological 'trajectory'. In short, whereas organisational rules and routines

are initially diffuse and unstable at the project level, Geels and Raven found that when multiple projects are networked a platform emerges upon which organisational learning can be compared and aggregated. With time this process leads to more specific and stable rules and framings. They called this the global niche level.

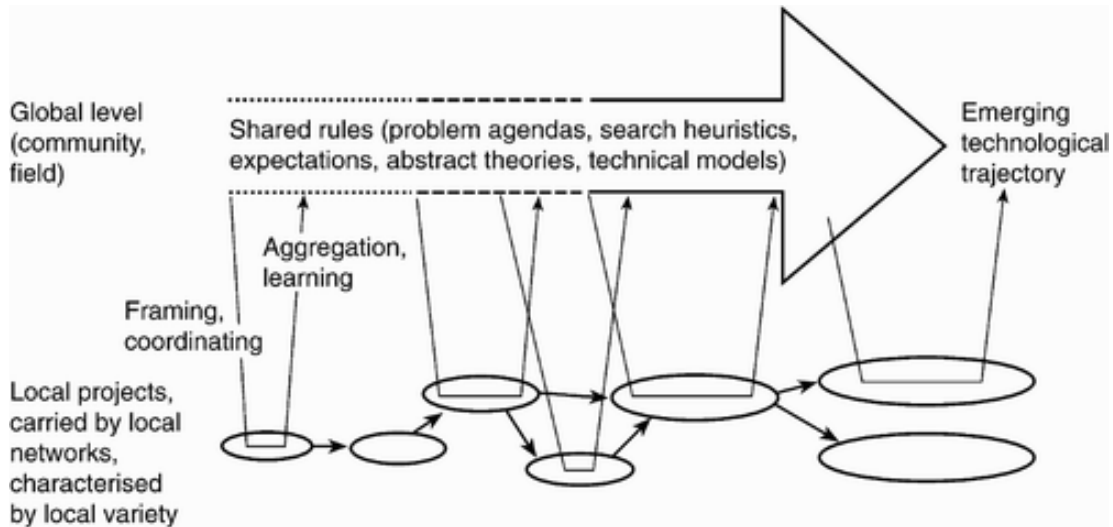


Figure 7. Relationships between local projects and the global level in niche development (Geels and Raven 2006)

So, going back to Schot and Geels (2008) question about the conditions under which radical sustainable innovations can develop and diffuse to disrupt – or otherwise influence/replace – the regime, SNM research has shown that the development of a global niche level, which has specific and stable rules and framings, and spans multiple local milieus, is key. Only then can the innovators draw on a field of activity and community of practice large enough and stable enough to influence incumbent actors. In the absence of these kinds of developments, radical sustainable innovations are likely to be beset by the challenges that face grassroots innovations (Seyfang and Smith 2007: 595-8, summarised above). Moreover, Geels and Deuten (2006) propose that in order for this global level to develop, an important role must be played by what they call ‘intermediary actors’. These organisations or individuals are instrumental in processes of niche development, including (1) the aggregation of lessons from individual projects, (2) the creation of an institutional infrastructure for the niche and (3) the co-ordination and framing of local level activities.

In the same recent study of the UK community energy sector as mentioned above, the role of intermediary actors was investigated in a setting where the majority were civil society organisations (Hargreaves, Hielscher et al. 2013). The study identified a fourth role played by intermediaries in niche development; brokering and managing partnerships between grassroots and regime actors. It also problematised the three original roles proposed by Geels and Deuten (2006) with respect to their application to grassroots innovations within civil society niches, because although evidence of all these activities was found, no evidence was found to suggest that a robust or cohesive global niche level was emerging. The authors argue that the diversity and dynamism of the sector works against the development of “a single successful approach or a strategic vision for its growth and diffusion” (p. 12). Rather, they suggest that ‘grassroots intermediation’ may be more about “opening up space in different contexts (whether local, market, policy, social etc.) for new and diverse kinds of activity”, a task that would be empowered by interventions that address “distortions and structural inequalities that exist in current policy and market contexts” (p. 12).

Nonetheless, it is clear from the literature that there is an important role for CSOs to play in the strategic management of grassroots innovations and the development of civil society niches, albeit that different forms of support will prove successful in different cases. Hence, in order to make this operational in my study, I will use Geels’ and Deuten’s (2006) and Hargreaves’ et al. (2013) characteristics of intermediation to identify organisations playing the role of niche development in transitions to sustainability (as follows).

*(1) **Aggregation:** the aggregation of lessons from individual projects that practice alternative socio-technical systems of food provision so as to generate niche-level, or ‘second-order’, learning.*

*(2) **Infrastructure creation:** the creation of institutional infrastructures for the niche, which typically involves building social networks that span multiple local milieus.*

*(3) **Co-ordination**: the co-ordination and framing of local-level activities, which may be expressed through the articulation of visions for the future of the niche.*

*(4) **Brokering**: the management of partnerships between grassroots and regime actors and the encouragement of outsiders to become actively involved in niche development.*

Returning to the broader question of distinguishable roles, the kinds of 'roles in transition' identified so far have all been of the sort that Smith et al. (2005) call 'bottom-up'. However, in a paper that criticises Sustainability Transitions scholarship for its myopic focus on niche-based innovation, they suggest that there is a lack of synchrony between the 'bottom-up' niche model and the ways in which actors from civil society actually frame and interpret their attempts to drive change. Shove and Walker (2010) have also highlighted this limitation of transitions scholarship, urging academics to remember that the niche-based model of innovation is just one way of viewing sustainability transitions amongst a range of possible others. In fact, Smith et al. (2005) argue that activists often seek to seed transitions from above (i.e. in a top-down fashion) and rarely work from the bottom up in ways that could be described as niche-based innovation. This is not to say that they believe civil society niches do not exist, but perhaps that their significance, in comparison to the other kinds of roles that civil society actors adopt in their attempts to drive change, is limited. In more recent times, scholars from within the field have responded to this kind of criticism by investigating other, more 'top-down' approaches.

4.2 Regime-oriented roles

4.2.1 Normative contestation

One of the first papers to tackle this area of research within the field of sustainability transitions was based on a Dutch food sector case study. Elzen et al. (2011) analysed the roles played by civil society actors with respect to recent developments in pig husbandry, the broader context being about transitions to higher welfare systems within incumbent agro-industrial regimes. They compared changes in the policies, technologies, institutions and public discourses operating within two subsectors of the pig industry (fattening and

breeding), as well as the campaigning strategies employed by civil society actors who were involved in the developments (i.e. animal welfare charities and activists). They adopted a mixed framework for interpreting the case studies, using the MLP to frame their questions, hypotheses and research design, but borrowing concepts from political studies (e.g. McCarthy and Zald 1977, Benford and Snow 2000, Polletta and Jasper 2001) to make sense of the interactions between civil society strategies and the changes in policies, technologies, institutions and public discourses that came about.

In both cases, they found that, by campaigning to generate pressure from the public and lobbying policymakers at various levels, civil society actors had encouraged selection pressures to shift in favour of niche technologies and intensified public dissatisfaction with the incumbent regime. They called this kind of activity 'normative contestation', because the charities and activists involved were contesting the social norms of the regime by arguing for higher standards of care for animals on ethical grounds.

In the case of pig breeding, the normative pressure led to significant adaptations being made to incumbent regimes in favour of the campaigners' objectives (i.e. for higher levels of animal welfare). However, in the case of pig fattening there were no significant changes to policy or practice, despite comparable levels of effort on the behalf of the campaigners. This revealed an important finding about the conditions under which strategies of normative contestation can drive transitions. Although the campaigners mobilised similar levels of support from their social networks, and the opportunities for influencing policy were comparable in both cases, the way that they communicated their ideas to the public and policymakers differed considerably. Of particular significance was the fact that the messaging in the pig breeding campaign was more focussed and emotionally resonant than in the pig fattening campaign, making it more likely to motivate peoples' support.

In a separate study that used the TEF (Geels 2014) to interpret the historical decline of the British coal industry, Turnheim and Geels (2012) found that civil society actors played a mediating role in its destabilisation and demise, with other (state and market) actors

exerting more direct influence over the processes involved. Specifically, the role that civil society was found to play was in the legitimisation (and de-legitimation) of regime practices, which was driven primarily by environmental movement activists. However, this influence was heavily constrained by other factors: policymakers shielded the industry from shocks, public opinion was not strongly concerned about environmental issues, and industry actors used sophisticated political and framing strategies to defend their practices from normative contestation. When a transition from coal-energy systems to other energy systems did occur, the authors found that pressures in the task environment (i.e. economic pressures) were the direct causes of destabilisation, whereas factors relating to the loss of legitimacy (i.e. pressures from civil society activism) catalysed and compounded them, but did not directly drive the change.

In another study that uses the TEF to interpret the roles of different actors in an historical transition towards sustainability, Penna and Geels (2012) carved out a more detailed picture of what this mediating role played by civil society is actually about. In their analysis of the ‘greening’ of the US car industry in response to concerns over (and campaigning about) air pollution, they found that civil society actors were instrumental in shaping and developing public concern so that it eventually sparked widespread reforms to the industry regime – though the eventual outcome was incremental rather than radical change. Through their analysis they elaborated on a model from political science that describes the five phases by which societal issues (e.g. air pollution) develop within public arenas and exert pressure on incumbent industries: firstly, issues emerge in civil society, championed by social movement activists; secondly, they spill over into public opinion; thirdly, this stimulates political debate on the issue; fourth, regulations may be applied to the offending industry; and fifth, consumer preferences shift in favour of alternative products. Phases one to three concern the (de)legitimation of the incumbent industrial regime by different actors in the institutional environment, whilst in phases four and five the pressures on the regime are dominantly economic, coming from the task environment.

In line with Turnheim and Geels (2012)'s claims, Penna and Geels (2012) found that the offending industry (i.e. the car industry) only started to respond with any force to these pressures at the fourth stage; before this, the threat was presumably not considered to be worrisome. Hence, from the perspective of the car industry firms, pressures in the task environment constituted the direct causes of destabilisation, as it was only when economic conditions started to shift (i.e. with punitive regulations and shifting consumer preferences) that commitment to the industry regime waned. But even then, Penna and Geels (2012) found that destabilisation did not result in a full-blown transition to a more sustainable regime. Rather, the incumbent industry regime selectively adopted elements of greener practice but persisted without significant change to its norms and rules, missions and identity, and institutional structures.

In these three studies, civil society actors played active and influential, yet constrained, roles in transition. A central process in transition, regime destabilisation, is shown to be driven by interactions between other sets of actors in addition to civil society, including the firms within the industry in question, as well as policymakers and the public. It is also shown that destabilisation doesn't necessarily lead to transition, but that industries can fight back in a number of ways, including through using their own attempts to influence public opinion and policy debates, and by selectively adopting elements of niche practices whilst maintaining overall coherence of the regime. Nonetheless, in the five-phase model described above – which the authors call the Dialectic Issue Life-Cycle model – it is activity from civil society that starts the destabilisation process off, even though the major pressures to industry were generated by regulations and changes in market demand. And in the detail of the case studies there is a more complex story to be told, wherein civil society actors engage in long, drawn-out battles with industries for influence over public opinion. In this view, civil society is an important arena in which firms-within-industries must earn their legitimacy (which they cannot function without).

Hence, there is an important role for civil society actors in these processes, which for simplicity I will call 'normative contestation' following Elzen et al. (2011). When they engage in normative contestation, what they are doing is *contesting the rules and norms*,

missions and identity, established practices, capabilities and standards of incumbent regimes on moral and ethical grounds. As with the other roles outlined above, in order to make this operational in my study I have broken the concept down into a set of core characteristics, drawn from the literature reviewed above.

*(1) **Legitimation:** the identification and development of focused and emotionally resonant messaging that draws on socially-determined criteria of legitimacy which can be used to reinforce or undermine claims about alternative and incumbent food systems (i.e. in campaigning and lobbying).*

*(2) **Campaigning:** the use of focused and emotionally resonant messaging to either (1) intensify public dissatisfaction with the incumbent regime, for instance by campaigning against the use of products, calling for boycotts, or naming-and-shaming companies and industries, or (2) increase public support for alternative systems and shift consumer preference in favour of niche technologies, for instance by providing moral and ethical imperatives, evidence of benefits and demonstration of viability.*

*(3) **Lobbying:** the use of a range of messages and tactics to persuade policymakers at various levels to act in ways that favour alternative systems and/or disfavour the incumbent regime, for instance by adapting policy frameworks, changing legislation, banning products, or offering political support for alternatives.*

4.2.2 Reform and re-orientation

The possibility that civil society actors might be directly involved in regime reform and re-orientation processes was touched upon in the review of the previous chapter. However, relatively little attention has been paid by scholars to the roles in transition played by civil society actors that develop more symbiotic relationships with regime incumbents. One notable exception is Smith (2006, 2007) who, in his research into the organic food niche in the UK, showed how, by creating and delivering regulatory systems, such as food labelling schemes and production standards, civil society actors can help regime incumbents to

respond and adapt to social pressures. For Smith, this work was part-and-parcel of strategic niche development. He argues that:

“It is essential for niches to be both radical and reforming. That is, there can be niche elements which can be appropriated by the mainstream relatively easily and which may form a first step towards mildly more sustainable reforms. Meanwhile, the more radical practices will continue to be pursued by committed actors within a renewed niche.” (Smith 2006: 455)

Moreover, driving sustainable reforms to regimes means translating niche elements into acceptable formats that can be embedded within relatively unchanged regime contexts, which requires active effort from both regime and niche-based actors (Smith 2007). For Smith (2007: 446), translation can take three distinct forms:

1. *“Translating sustainability problems, i.e. how problems in the regime inform the guiding principles creating the niche.*
2. *Translations that adapt lessons, i.e. reinterpreting elements of socio-technical practice in the niche and inserting them into regime settings, or modifying the niche in the light of lessons learnt about the regime.*
3. *Translations that alter contexts, i.e. changes that bring the regime closer to the situation that pertains in the niche, or vice versa.”*

However, this work of translating and embedding²⁸ niche elements into existing configurations of practices, routines, systems and other patterns of use, has received relatively little attention within the sustainability transitions literature, despite the fact that some have argued for social embedding to be considered as the end point of

²⁸ The concept of embedding is used within the AFN literature in quite a different way – i.e. the assumption is that different kinds of food systems can be more or less socially embedded. Moreover, high levels of embeddedness is seen as “one of the main traits that distinguish alternative food networks from the conventional chains” Sonnino, R. and T. Marsden (2006). “Beyond the divide: rethinking relationships between alternative and conventional food networks in Europe.” *Journal of Economic Geography* 6(2): 181-199. See also pp.189 onwards.

transition (Genus and Coles 2008). Moreover, Geels et al. (2008) argue that the social embedding of innovations is only partially problematised and often inadequately conceptualised within the various disciplines that address the topic (i.e. not limited to sustainability transitions). With respect to Economics and Management Studies they claim that:

“Much attention is given to the development of innovation and the formation of new industries. The black box of industrial dynamics is opened up but social embedding is seen as less problematic, or even ignored, and is conceptualised primarily as market adoption (diffusion).” (Geels, Hekkert et al. 2008)

One of the few studies from the sustainability transitions field that addresses regime reform and re-orientation processes empirically is a comparative case study of care farming. Through this study the authors sought to unravel the different strategies that organisations have used to align the care farming niche with both the healthcare and agricultural regimes in the Netherlands (Hassink, Grin et al. 2013). What they found was that this work of engaging with multiple regimes entailed specific roles for niche actors that they call (interchangeably) ‘change makers’ and ‘boundary spanners’. These actors are described as “visionaries who are able to make the connection between societal developments at the landscape level, putting pressure on the dominant regime and creating room for manoeuvre at the local level”. Their key contribution is to build trust “when the actors and areas of activity involved are distant from each other”, as is often the case when civil society actors seek to engage with regime actors (interviewees of Hargreaves et al. (2013) spoke of a “huge, yawning cultural gap”).

Going back to the study of pig husbandry discussed in section 4.2.1 above, this study may also reveal an interesting finding about regime reform. In the pig breeding campaign, the activities of civil society actors coincided with specific niche and landscape level developments that were variously not present, not sustained, or were present but did not coincide, in the pig fattening campaign. These developments included the availability of acceptable niche technologies which could replace incumbent systems (i.e. alternative

husbandry systems or adaptations to existing systems) and the occurrence of shocks to the incumbent systems (e.g. outbreaks of swine fever). So, in the case of pig breeding – which brought about successful reforms to the Dutch pig husbandry regime – demand for policy change from within government coincided with the availability of an acceptable niche technology, at a time of escalating public pressure in the face of shocks to the incumbent system. Thus, focussed and emotionally resonant campaigning from civil society groups could harness these opportunities to drive change in favour of higher levels of animal welfare. In MLP terminology, this constitutes the alignment of processes at multiple levels: niche (technology availability), regime (political opportunity) and landscape (public outcry at the disease outbreak).

Finally, there is one scholar from within the Science, Technology and Innovation field who has addressed this issue more directly, by applying a framework derived from Social Movements Theory to the study of nutritional therapeutics, wind energy, and open-source software (Hess 2005). Instead of framing these cases as socio-technical niches, Hess develops a new concept: ‘Technology- and Product-oriented Movements’ (TPMs). He defines TPMs as “mobilizations of civil society organizations that generally are also linked to the activity of private sector firms, for which the target of social change is support for an alternative technology and/or product, as well as the policies with which they are associated”, and “...changes in consumption patterns and lifestyles” (p. 516-8). The primary mode of agency used by TPMs is, according to Hess, “building and diffusing alternative forms of material culture” (p. 516), a description that overlaps significantly with the socio-technical niche concept. For Hess, TPMs emerge from and are part of wider Social Movements (SMs), but they themselves are divided between two poles. One pole is associated with the traditional SM and made up of advocacy and activist organisations, whilst the other is associated with a related ‘Reform Movement’, and largely made up of occupational and research organisations.

According to Hess, the relationships that develop between these two poles of TPMs are fundamental to their success in generating transformations of material culture, such as the conversion of a major industry towards more sustainable forms of production. If the

relationship is synergistic then Hess suggests that the movement actors can create a pathway towards influencing their target industries, through processes that are similar to niche development and diffusion, but which he collectively calls “private sector symbiosis” (Hess 2005: 516). Once this symbiosis is developed, Hess suggests that the alternative technology or product can be selectively incorporated, or co-opted, into the industry regime. Again, this process is similar to the process of regime reform described by Smith (2006: 455), cited above, in which elements of a niche innovation which fit in with existing regime contexts are assimilated, resulting in weak forms of sustainability being practiced.

In response to this new situation, Hess argues that a round of “object conflicts” are sparked off within the TPM, whereby the radical and reformist poles struggle to define and frame the alternative technology or product in different ways. For Hess, this dynamic relationship between radical and reformist poles of TPMs, which involves successive waves of symbiosis, incorporation and conflict, prevails over time without necessarily reaching a clear end-point. However, instead of becoming exhausted by each round of this, “activists and advocacy organizations find themselves on a new historical terrain characterized by a diversification of the technological and product field” ... “the starting point for the next wave of conflicts over the future of material culture and society” (p. 532).

In summary, the processes through which civil society actors engage in attempts to reform and reorient incumbent food regimes are not well established within the sustainability transitions literature. However, in terms of conceptualising the roles that they can play, there are several pointers from the literature reviewed above. Put simply, playing a reforming role involves the encouragement of regime actors, including mainstream businesses and public bodies, to adopt and embed more sustainable configurations of technologies, practices and organisational arrangements, thus leading to the reform and re-orientation of incumbent food regimes. As with the other roles, in order to make this operational in the study I have defined two core characteristics of the role, drawn from the literature above.

*(1) the ‘**embedding**’ of reforms which entails the translation/alteration of (a) grassroots innovations into acceptable formats and their incorporation within regime contexts, and/or (b) regime contexts to make them fit better with grassroots innovations and other, more sustainable, configurations.*

*(2) the ‘**negotiation**’ of ongoing re-orientation processes which entails (a) the careful management of relationships with both niche and regime actors – i.e. building trust and confidence in the presence of sharp technical, social, or cognitive divides, as well as (b) responding judiciously to opportunities for harnessing alignment between synergistic developments at niche, regime and landscape levels.*

4.3 Discussion

In my review of the literature above, I have shown how scholars of sustainability transitions have attempted to describe and explain the different roles played in transition by civil society actors. Principally, what I have found is that four distinguishable roles are characterised within this literature. The following are definitions, for use in the study, of those four roles (see also Figure 8 below):

1. Grassroots innovation role²⁹, i.e. experimentation, in the protective spaces of civil society niches, with novel, more sustainable configurations of food provisioning that respond to local situations and the interests and values of the communities involved.
2. Niche development role, i.e. facilitation of learning and capacity-building around grassroots innovations, thus aiding the strategic development (including up-scaling and replication) of alternative systems of food provision.
3. Normative contestation role, i.e. application of normative pressure to the public, policy-makers and food industry, which undermines existing unsustainable

²⁹ This is a definition of the role/process of grassroots innovation (verb), as played by civil society actors in sustainability transitions. A separate definition of grassroots innovations (noun) was provided in section 4.1.1.

practices and shifts favour towards alternative systems – thereby destabilising incumbent food regimes.

4. Regime reform role, i.e. encouragement of regime actors, including mainstream businesses and public bodies, to adopt and embed more sustainable configurations of technologies, practices and organisational arrangements, thus leading to the reform and re-orientation of incumbent food regimes.

In the following chapters I will use this typology of ‘roles in transition’ to frame my empirical investigation into the attempts of civil society actors in the UK to drive change towards sustainability in food systems. I will call it the roles-in-transition (RIT) framework. The term ‘role(s)’ is intended to mean: “the function performed by someone or something in a particular situation or process. Freq. in to play a role (in)” (Oxford English Dictionary 2013). In this context, the overarching process is transition and together the four roles are considered as component mechanisms of systemic innovation, which drives transition. However, the term also has a connotation of intentionality, which is of relevance because I *will not* make prior assumptions about the intentions of the CSOs in my study with respect to their involvement in transitions. Rather, I will seek to differentiate between the theoretically deduced, functional roles in the framework, on the one hand, and those that are empirically constructed and self-defined by the CSOs in my study, on the other.

But just to backtrack a moment, what actually makes the roles distinguishable? First, all four concepts have been recognised by scholars as worthy of empirical investigation in the terms described in the above review. The two niche-facing roles, grassroots innovation and niche development, are the most well-established in the literature, having received considerable attention within scholarly circles (Schot and Geels 2008, Smith and Seyfang 2013)³⁰. The two regime-facing roles, however, have received relatively less (or at least more fragmented) critical attention and development, meaning that their validity and distinctiveness is less certain. Nonetheless, each role has been exemplified in certain

³⁰ In addition to being the focus of the two special issues cited above, both concepts have featured prominently in university-based research projects, and have been debated at international conferences on sustainability transitions, such as the 2nd International Conference on Sustainability Transitions (IST 2011) at which there was a working group on civil society in transitions.

empirical contexts, if not tested through replication in different contexts. However, given that the roles have not been subject to parallel treatment within a single study, it is possible that a different (less distinguishable) picture could emerge from an attempt to do so. Hence, my methodology – which is explained in the next chapter – is designed to be alert to this possibility.

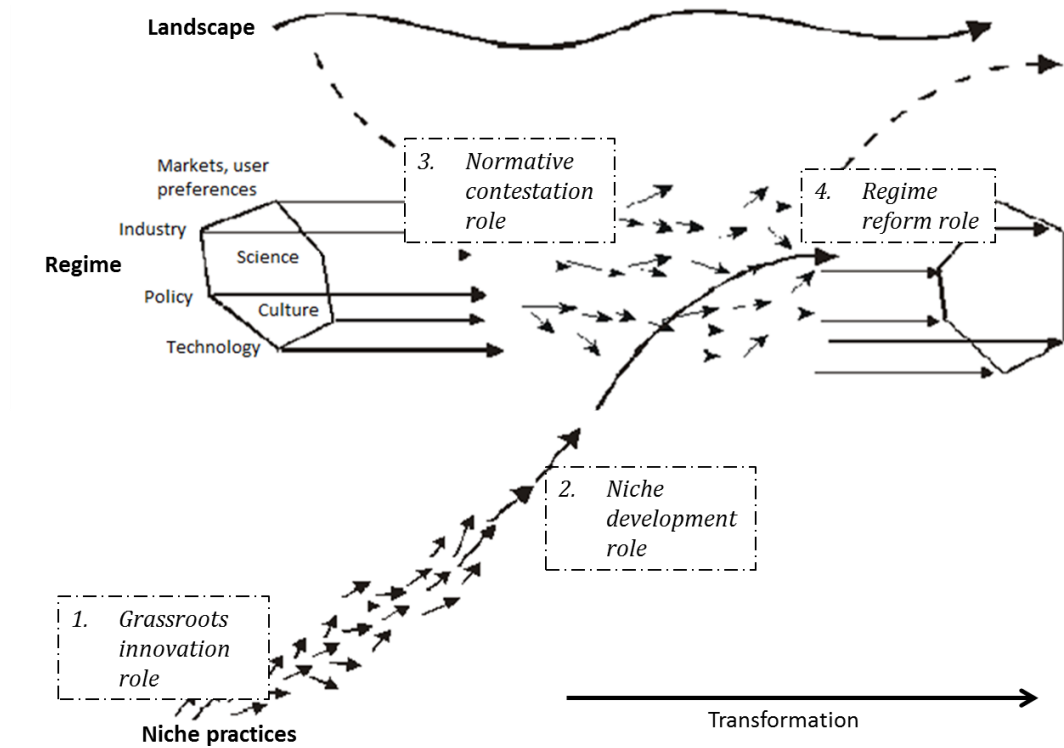


Figure 8. Typology of civil society roles in transition, diagram adapted from Geels (2002)

But second, and perhaps more persuasively, I would argue that – at least in theory – they are distinguishable by the different types of agency, or ‘modes of power exercise’, involved in each case (Avelino and Rotmans 2009). This will take a little explaining, so for starters, a note on power and agency³¹.

³¹ In the context of this study, my understanding of power follows Avelino and Rotmans (2009), and is explained further below. My understanding of ‘agency’ is as a derivative of power. Thus, following the Oxford English Dictionary OED Online (2013). “agency, n.”. [Oxford University Press](#), *ibid.*, ‘agency’ implies:

- Ability or capacity to act or exert power
- Action or intervention producing a particular effect
- Such action embodied or personified

In the sequence of discussions about how civil society actors in the UK might seek to drive change towards sustainability in food systems contained within this chapter and the previous chapter, notions of power and agency were largely implicit. However, there were several points at which these concepts were mentioned more explicitly. First, I highlighted a power imbalance between different kinds of CSOs: those that are described by Alcock (2010) as ‘professionalised, resource-rich, policy-insider organisations’, and those that are ‘grassroots, resource-poor, policy-outsider organisations’. Second, I introduced Macmillan’s recursive model of agency and structure with respect to civil society (2011: 23). In this view, CSOs make ‘room’ for themselves within dynamic, strategically-selective environments by engaging in strategic learning and action so that they can fit better with existing dynamics and/or influence existing dynamics in ways that favour their strategies (p. 28). Third, I used examples from the AFN literature to illustrate different characteristics of AFNs that are related to integrity and empowerment, and the consequences of embodying these to differing degrees.

Fourth, I also relayed Hargreaves et al.’s (2013) account of ‘grassroots intermediation’, which echoes Macmillan’s explanation of CSO agency, as they explain it’s functioning in terms of: “opening up space in different contexts (whether local, market, policy, social etc.) for new and diverse kinds of activity” (p. 12). This explanation is also partly echoed by Hess’s dialectical description of the on-going relations between movement actors and regime actors in which successive waves of symbiosis, incorporation and conflict continuously open up new ‘terrains’ of contestation (Hess 2005); in Hassink et al.’s (2013) account of niche actors that “create room for manoeuvre at the local level” by building relationships with regime actors; and finally, in Smith and Raven’s (2012) notion of power and agency, whereby niches either empower radical innovations to ‘fit and conform’ with existing regime contexts, or to ‘stretch and transform’ the regime contexts in order that the more radical niche innovation can spread³².

³² Smith and Raven’s (2012) work on niche empowerment was not mentioned in the above review because – by attributing agency to niches rather than organisational actors – it conceals the roles played by those different actors.

In each of these conceptualisations, knowledge of environmental (i.e. regime and landscape) contexts, as well as the capacity to influence them, are important factors in the empowerment of civil society visions for the future. Avelino and Rotmans (2009) and Avelino (2011) encapsulate this link in their ‘post-modern’ understanding of the relations between knowledge and power in transitions (see Figure 9 below). They developed a framework for understanding power in transition because they noticed that although the transitions literature is replete with implicit presumptions about power – especially in the MLP, which they call “the most power-laden conceptualisation in transition studies” – it “does not explicitly define or mention power” (p. 544-5). I will now briefly consider how this framework relates to the typology of civil society roles in transition outlined above.

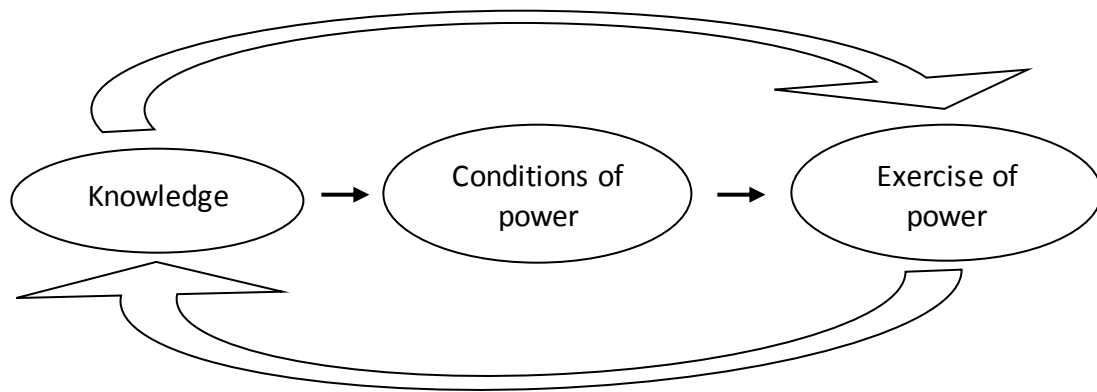


Figure 9. Relationships between knowledge and power, adapted from Avelino and Rotmans (2009)

In their framework, which draws on a substantial review of relevant scholarly literature from outside the sustainability transitions field, power is defined as “the ability of actors to mobilise resources to achieve a certain goal” (Avelino and Rotmans 2009: 550). They operationalise this in a typology of ‘power exercise’, i.e. the methods by which actors involved in transitions mobilise resources to achieve their goals, where ‘resources’ are understood to be any forms of human, mental, monetary, artefactual or natural capital that can be possessed by an actor (this excludes norms, rules, institutions, cultures and traditions). This typology links the conditions of power exercise – i.e. **knowledge** of what resources exist and how to deploy them effectively, as well as **practical skills** and **moral capacities** (‘willingness’) to deploy them – to the challenge of driving change at the level

of an entire social system. To possess the conditions of power exercise is to be 'empowered'; however, the specific conditions vary depending on what mode of power is being exercised. Avelino and Rotmans' typology describes four different modes: innovative, reinforcing, constitutive, and transformative power³³ (see Figure 10 below).

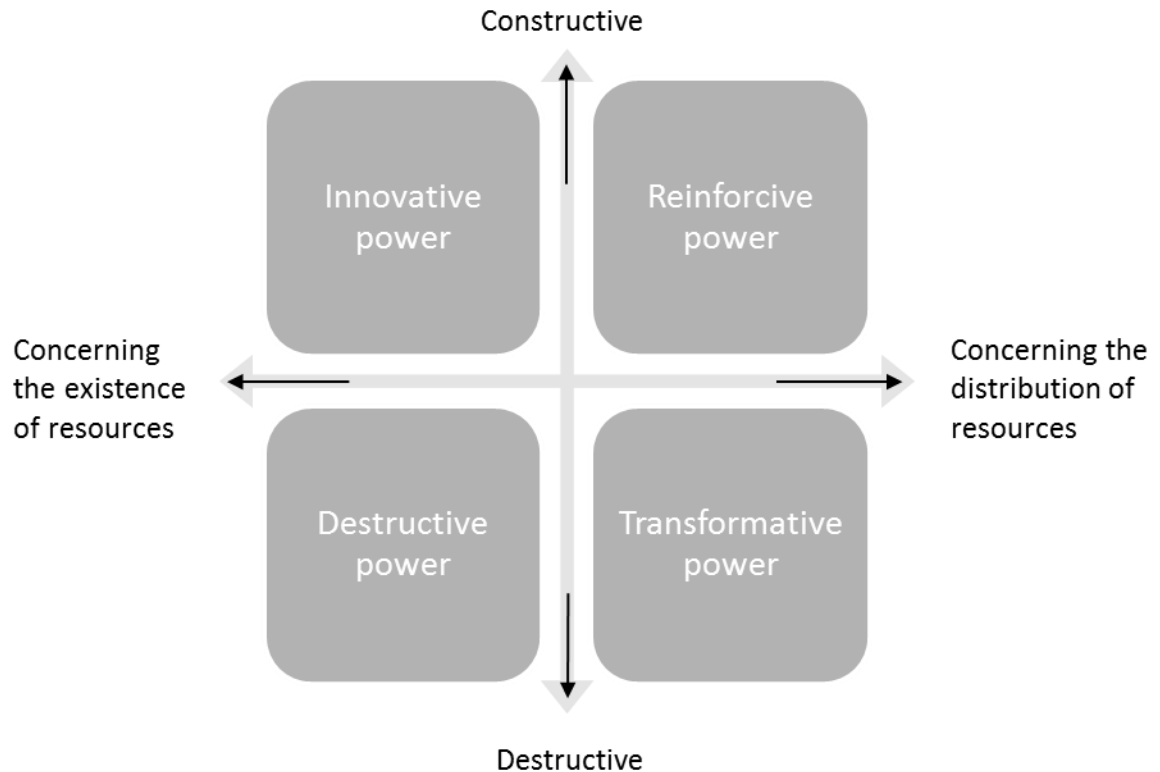


Figure 10. Typology of power exercise (based on Avelino and Rotmans, 2009)

According to this typology, actors involved in transition exercise 'innovative power' when they create or discover new resources, 'destructive power' when they destroy or annihilate existing resources, 'reinforcing power' when they establish a distribution of

³³ There is one more key dimension to Avelino and Rotmans' (2009) framework – the level of the societal system as a whole (e.g. the food system). They say that 'systemic power' is the combined capacity of all actors in a system to mobilise resources for the survival of that system. For them, the starting point of transition is always an actual or perceived threat of a 'power vacuum' at the system level, such as a major global crisis for which none of the actors within the system are prepared (they collectively lack the conditions of power exercise in the new situation, thus systemic power is low or rapidly declining). At this point, "when the need for new resources is high, while the availability is low, space is offered to more 'radical' forms of innovative and transformative power" (p. 561). The converse is true at the end point of transition: all forms of power are being exercised (there is a 'power plenum'), fears have been allayed, and a new 'dynamic equilibrium' is reached.

resources, and ‘transformative power’ when they redistribute or replace existing resources. Avelino and Rotmans (2009) argue that regime actors are generally concerned with exercising reinforcing power in order to perpetuate the incumbent distribution of resources within the system; niche actors, on the other hand, would plausibly have a stronger interest in exercising innovative, destructive or transformative power.

Relating this four-way typology of power exercise to the typology of civil society roles in transition outlined above suggests that there is a qualitative difference in the mode of power exercise associated with each of the four roles (see Table 5 below).

Table 5. A typology of civil society actors’ ‘roles in transition’ cf. ‘mode of power exercise’

Role	Role description	Mode of power exercise	Orientation
Grassroots innovation	Experimentation with alternative systems	<i>Innovative power</i>	Niche
Niche development	Strategic development of alternative systems	<i>Reinforcing power</i>	
Normative contestation	Disruption and destabilisation of incumbent regimes	<i>Destructive power</i>	Incumbent regime
Regime reform	Reform and regulation of incumbent regimes	<i>Transformative power</i>	

But even considering the distinguishable modes of power exercise associated (in theory) with each role, it is still necessary to ask whether there are ways in which the roles might overlap, flow into each other, or otherwise be less readily distinguishable than I have suggested. After all, though I have thus far made an assumption that the roles are comparable, the empirical question of *what the roles are/how they are performed in practice* remains open (i.e. are they distinguished by, *inter alia*, specific sets of relationships, practices, activities, or intentions, and so on?).

On which note, whilst the body of literature on which this typology is based has shed light on previously un- or under-recognised phenomena, critics argue that it has been framed in ways that obfuscate important dimensions concerning intentionality. By adopting a 'systems view' of transitions that seeks to transcend individual actors' perspectives, and by subsequently suggesting that the actors involved are playing specific roles within this overarching process of change, scholars – myself included – risk imposing their own views of intentionality onto them (Walker and Shove 2007). After all, one implication of 'role-play' is that it is intentional. But what do the actors involved think about this? What would an 'actor view' look like? Throughout this study I hope to disentangle the two by confronting scholarly views on civil society roles in transition with actor-level perspectives and views coming from civil society organisations themselves. Then I will be able to come to my own conclusions about the correspondence between them.

But going back to the question of whether/how the different roles might overlap or flow into each other it is clear from the literature reviewed that, under certain conditions, they can have the effect of reinforcing one another. In fact, they may even be inextricably interdependent. For instance, the role of grassroots innovation – experimenting with alternative values, trying to realise them in novel socio-technical configurations – may be enriched by the influence of intermediary actors playing the role of niche development, e.g. facilitating knowledge sharing between these new initiatives and helping them gain access to resources (Hargreaves, Hielscher et al. 2013). On the flipside, without the creation of alternative systems there would be nothing to develop, and without development, the alternatives would remain too radical and disparate from mainstream systems to be of any value to them. Likewise, the role of normative contestation – questioning the legitimacy of regime practices – can be strengthened if there are credible grassroots innovations to compare and substitute them with (Elzen, Geels et al. 2011). On the flipside, without being able to point to examples of just how sustainably things can be done, CSOs would lack credibility when they criticise mainstream systems.

Furthermore, if they are acceptable, these alternatives can be the basis of reforms to incumbent regimes, thus enabling the reform role (Smith 2007). If they are not, then

further work may be required in developing them – e.g. through professionalising, standardising and up-scaling, which are implied by the development role. Or alternatively, sustained normative contestation of the regime may open up space for deeper transformation of regime contexts (Smith and Raven 2012), or even the decline of incumbent regimes, so that alternative systems can retain their integrity as they are embedded. On the flipside, without the pressures of being challenged and disrupted, food policy makers and businesses would not consider that there was a need for reform. Moreover, if they had not been developed to improve their performance, alternative practices would not fit the requirements for incorporation into mainstream systems that are undergoing reform.

The point is that there are clearly positive reinforcements between the roles (see Figure 11 at the end of this chapter) – and perhaps they even necessarily imply each other, each being a constituent part of a larger whole – but are there conditions under which the different roles can undermine one another? Can the roles, under certain conditions, necessarily *negate* each other? This question has not been given equal consideration within the existing literature.

It is also clear that certain conditions in regimes and wider environments may influence the performance of the different roles, including in ways other than predicted by niche-based accounts of transitions. For instance, industry regimes may have their own endogenous processes – relating to commitment – that alter the opportunities for civil society to engage over time, i.e. the different phases of declining commitment and destabilisation highlighted by Turnheim and Geels' (2012). On the other hand, multiple institutional and economic factors that are exogenous to regimes – i.e. they originate in the socio-technical landscape of regimes – may combine to produce further sets of opportunities for civil society to drive change in regime contexts, as shown by Penna and Geels (2012). But these are just two isolated case studies that have engaged with this question, leaving much room for further elaboration.

Yet another question arising from the presentation of this framework – which I began to address in my discussion of power and agency above – is whether, and if so how, it corresponds with other views and frameworks that are based on empirical research into civil society engagement with food systems and sustainability. For instance, might Geels and Raven's global niche level correspond with either or both the subsectors and the social networks associated with distinct societal issues/policy fields identified by Alcock (2010)? And if so, could it be that the Food Ethics Council's (2011) food and farming subsector of civil society is evidence in itself to suggest the existence of an emerging global niche concerned with sustainable food and farming in the UK? After all, the survey identified a whole class of CSOs whose work is about 'co-ordination and capacity building', or 'intermediation' in SNM terminology. Moreover, examples of phenomena that fit the grassroots innovations and civil society niches concepts, and which are concerned with food (and farming) systems, abound in the literature on Alternative Food Networks (AFNs) that was discussed in the previous chapter. In fact, the first calls for crossover between these two distinct academic fields have just started to come from AFN scholars in the past few years (Brunori 2011, Goodman, Goodman et al. 2011, Marsden 2013); before then niche development frameworks had not been used to analyse these phenomena (Little, Maye et al. 2010).

However, in terms of empirical work that tests the applicability of a niche-based approach to AFNs, there are only two studies that I am currently aware of, including the study of local food projects in the UK mentioned in section 4.1.1 above (Kirwan, Ilbery et al. 2013). Interestingly, these two studies both highlight a specific issue that has been given relatively little attention within the sustainability transitions literature, i.e. the significance of place with respect to the generation of sustainability benefits. Given that one of the two studies looks specifically at *local* food projects, this is perhaps not too surprising and may seem of limited relevance to understanding phenomena which are seemingly less concerned with place and locality (e.g. organic or fair-trade networks). However, local food forms a substantial part of AFNs in general (Kirwan, Ilbery et al. 2013) and is central to civil society activity on food and farming in the UK (Food Ethics Council 2011).

Moreover, within organic and fair-trade networks the geographies of food production and consumption are of critical importance (Goodman 2009).

Hence, this crossing-over of AFNs and sustainability transitions acts as a warning to scholars such as me, who are using multi-level and niche-based frameworks, that spatial and situational (as well as temporal and historical) dynamics are key to understanding the attempts of grassroots actors to drive change towards sustainability in food systems. This point is made most forcefully by Marsden (2013), who calls for “place-based forms of reflexive governance” in order to create a platform for transitions towards more sustainable future food systems.

Moreover, whilst they are not explicitly framed as studies of sustainability transitions, the literature on AFNs has produced many additional case studies that are of relevance here, in that they interrogate the outcomes of civil society engagements with food systems and sustainability. From this stock of cases, it is possible to establish two important parallels between the theoretical accounts of change provided by sustainability transitions scholars on the one hand, and AFN scholars on the other. In essence, both suggest that innovations developed within networks – which are distinct from mainstream food systems – provide an alternative to industrial food; and both agree that the capacity of these networks to transform incumbent food regimes depends on a mix of external and internal factors. However, neither has provided a general set of factors that is proven to reliably account for the variable outcomes of civil society actors’ purposeful attempts to drive transitions.

So, given the contextual and theoretical framings that I have established above, and the questions that I have raised about them, I have developed the following research questions to guide my study design. As I said at the beginning of the previous chapter, this study is about understanding what civil society organisations are doing, why they are doing it, and what the consequences are. But it is also about how this looks under both system-level and actor-level views. Whereas question one (below) takes a system-level (or spectator) view of the situation (Sayer 1992), question two is about testing this against

an actor-level view, and question three tests both against the views from CSOs themselves.

1. What are the distinguishable kinds of roles that civil society actors play in their attempts to drive change towards sustainability in food systems?
2. How do the strategic activities of individual civil society organisations (CSOs), parts of CSOs, and associations of multiple CSOs relate to these roles, concurrently and over time?
3. How do these roles relate to the stated intentions of key-actors within CSOs?

In the next chapter I will explain the methodological approach that I will adopt in order to test these questions.

4.4 Conclusions

In the introduction to this thesis I said that my primary purpose is to make a significant contribution to academic literatures that engage with the roles of civil society actors in sustainability transitions of food systems. My rationale for this approach is related to a number of gaps – or rather ‘areas of neglect’ – within the scholarly literatures that address this topic. I have drawn on at least four different academic fields in my review of literatures that spans both this chapter and the last. They include (1) Science, Technology and Innovation Studies, (2) general literatures on civil society (including from Voluntary and Third Sector Studies, Law, History and Non-profit Management), (3) Political Science (for Regime Analysis and Social Movements Theory) and (4) Geography/Rural Sociology (for Alternative and Civic Food Networks). Each has approached the topic in a different way, and each has neglected to address part of the picture. Critically, I have shown that Science, Technology and Innovation Studies has neglected civil society involvement and agency/power in transitions (Seyfang and Smith, 2007; Avelino and Kunz, 2009; Avelino and Rotmans, 2009; Smith et al. 2005) and that Political Science has neglected material culture/technology in studies of social movements (Hess, 2005). It has also been argued that AFN scholars have neglected the roles of civil society (Renting, Schermer et al. 2012), whilst AFNs have been ‘under-theorised’ within Geography and Rural Sociology (Sonnino

and Marsden 2006, Goodman and Goodman 2009), which has stimulated calls for cross-over with Sustainability Transitions frameworks (Brunori 2011, Goodman, Goodman et al. 2011, Marsden 2013). Moreover, I found that literatures on civil society do not make much use of frameworks that explain societal level change processes, tending instead to use micro-social frameworks for understanding the agency of civil society actors.

Then, at the start of this chapter, I said that I would confront scholarly views on civil society roles in transition with actor-level perspectives and (through my own empirical work) views coming from civil society organisations themselves. It is primarily through this endeavour that I hope to build improved understanding of this field of research, as the need for establishing an actor-level view of civil society involvement in transitions is clear. For, at the centre of the MLP and other approaches to studying sustainability transitions, are assumptions about intentionality, power and agency, which derive from studying private firms and their interactions with governmental institutions. However, as others have shown, civil society organisations are different to private firms in a number of important ways (Anheier 2000). Moreover, where civil society has been considered within these frameworks there is little focus on organisations as the subjects of analysis; case studies are often of niches and movements, or projects within niches. Amongst these studies, the main forms of agency attributed to CSOs are competition and/or normative contestation with firms and industries. Collaboration and competition *between* CSOs is not often considered in detail by scholars of sustainability transitions. In fact, there has thus far been very little attention afforded to the relationships between CSOs, with the exception of Hargreaves et al. (2013) work on grassroots initiatives and intermediary actors.

Nonetheless, from my reading of the transitions literature I have gained a perspective on the topic that matches the scope of the broad phenomena involved, i.e. a system-level view that can elucidate the radical, system-wide innovations and deep structural changes implicated in transition. This view has provided insights into the major distinguishable roles played by civil society in transitions. It has also raised insights and questions about how these roles relate to each other, and how they relate to the functioning of food

regimes, and trends and developments within wider environments. Finally, I have indicated ways by which these two views, system-level and actor-level, might be combined to produce improved understanding. In particular, I have argued that this will entail (1) a focus on power and agency, (2) sensitivity to the relationships between different scales and levels of organisation within civil society, as well as (3) recognition of the importance of place with respect to the direct and diffusion benefits of different configurations of food provisioning.

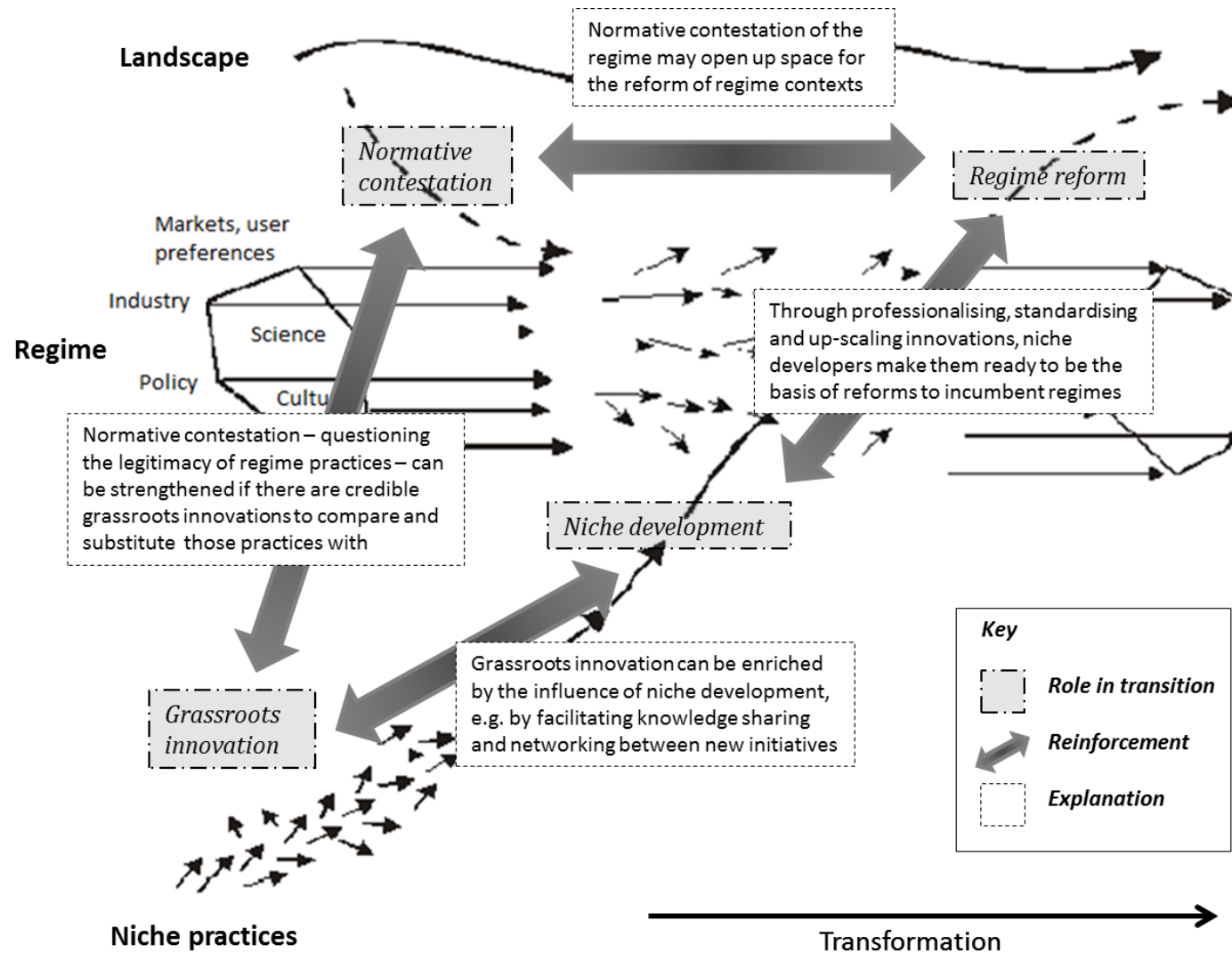


Figure 11. Positive reinforcements between the four roles in transition.

CHAPTER 5. Methodology

In this thesis I hope to help develop an improved understanding of how civil society actors in the UK are seeking to drive change towards sustainability in food systems. As discussed in previous chapters I will use my own typology of ‘roles in transition’, the RIT framework, to inform (rather than dictate) my empirical investigation. In this way I will create the conditions under which my empirical investigation can, in turn, inform existing theories about the roles that civil society actors play in transition. If I am successful in abstracting patterns from my empirical materials that can be shown to be sufficiently powerful and reliable, I will be making a contribution towards improved scholarly understandings of the phenomena in question³⁴ (Sayer 1992).

The connections that I will make between, 1) the RIT framework, 2) my empirical materials and, 3) my abstractions from those materials, comprise my methods, and the research questions that I established in the previous chapter will be one of the most important features of my methodology, applying to all the remaining stages and chapters of this thesis. The questions are as follows:

1. What are the distinguishable kinds of roles that civil society actors play in their attempts to drive change towards sustainability in food systems?
2. How do individual civil society organisations (CSOs), parts of CSOs, and associations of multiple CSOs relate to these roles, and to each other, concurrently and over time?
3. How do these roles relate to the stated intentions of key-actors within CSOs?

In the rest of this chapter I will describe and explain my choice of methods in detail, discussing the other important tools and techniques that I used, and demonstrating why they were suitable for the job. First, I will address my research design, and then I will

³⁴ That is, the attempts of civil society actors in the UK to drive change towards sustainability in food systems.

discuss my analysis and interpretation, before concluding the chapter. Whereas the first of these two phases – designing the research – was a largely linear process, the second – i.e. analysing and interpreting my empirical materials – was a largely iterative process. Moreover, although the basics of my research design were not much changed during its application, adaptations were made to specific tools and techniques as I progressed in my fieldwork, and more data was sought as the result of initial analysis. Hence, there was much iteration involved in the operationalisation of my basic research design.

5.1 Research design

My choice of research design is primarily motivated by three considerations. First, my intention is to make useful abstractions and generate concepts that can accurately account for the substantial relations between the concrete phenomena in my study, which requires a qualitative research design (Sayer 1992: 101). Second, the complexity of the topic demands a methodological approach that creates room for diversity in its application, whilst carefully grounding specific analyses within their empirical contexts. After all, transitions to sustainability, civil society and food systems are all subject to divergent and dynamic framings, inseparably intermeshed with other arenas, and continuously unfolding over time and space. And third, there are gaps in academic knowledge concerning the key actors at the heart of this study, i.e. UK-based CSOs that are currently engaged in attempts to make food systems more sustainable. According to Renting et al. (2012), “only fragmented information is available, especially on the basis of Internet sources and (field) expert knowledge, and only in exceptional cases (semi-) official data are published”. Hence, an exploratory approach is needed.

Case study research offers just such an approach, allowing for exploratory analysis of the substantial relations between phenomena in a way that is adaptable, sensitive to context and receptive to diversity. Case study research allows a broad range of observable phenomena to be captured, and provides rich contextualisations of those phenomena (Yin 2009). It is also particularly suitable for investigating contemporary and unfolding situations, where boundaries between focal phenomena and context are unclear (Yin

2009). And unlike quantitative survey-based designs, case study research allows an open-ended and iterative approach to be taken (Verschuren 2003), making it possible for the researcher to recognise inter-dependencies, encounter the unexpected, conduct further research and triangulate fieldwork findings before reaching closure (Eisenhardt 1989).

I therefore chose to use a qualitative case study approach, instead of alternatives such as survey-based or grounded theory approaches³⁵. Specifically, I used a multiple case design with a limited number of cases (see Figure 12 below). Given that the RIT framework is comprised of multiple role-types, this allowed for both rich empirical characterisation, as well as comparison, of the roles. It also allowed me to interrogate and distinguish between internal and external aspects of each case.

In terms of the types of cases that I chose to study, whilst I used the four roles in the RIT framework to inform my selection of cases, I did not set out to study cases of roles *per se*. For, although the concept of ‘roles’ has become focal in my study, it lacks concreteness and simultaneously suggests both actor-level as well as systems-level (or “spectator”) perspectives (Sayer 1992: 97), making it hard to operationalise as a unit of analysis. Moreover, picking cases of roles in a way that is overly dictated by the RIT framework could have carried the risk of exemplification (i.e. not allowing for critical testing/falsification of the framework). Thus, I instead studied cases centred on particular individual CSOs, selecting them according to the roles in transition that they appeared to play, simply on the basis of initial desk-based research and pilot interviews (see section 5.1.1 below) – but ***leaving it open for this picture to be tested and modified*** (see section 5.2.1 below, which details the various strategies that I adopted in order to increase the chance that I would encounter unexpected phenomena). This made particular sense

³⁵ Whereas the Food Issues Census – which relied in survey-based methods – has provided a useful mapping of the civil society food and agriculture sub-sector, further survey work would be less appropriate in this context as it could only provide a snapshot of the CSOs’ activities and would not enable an investigation of the mechanisms and processes involved in their’ attempts to influence transitions, which is sought within this study. Furthermore, whereas grounded theory approaches can usefully elucidate key mechanisms and processes within a given research situation, it would provide a less strong basis for contributing to the Sustainability Transitions literature, which is an additional key aim of this study. Moreover, whereas an ethnographic approach could capture micro-social processes, it would fail to capture macro-level structures.

because CSOs are the key actors at the heart the study, and because the CSO concept is sufficiently concrete to ground the study (organisations are relatively easy to bound, even if their relationship to the concept of ‘civil society’ allows room for much diversity and interpretation). Moreover, though there are other sufficiently concrete kinds of actors, objects and processes that I could have made into cases³⁶, to choose a different focal unit would have risked letting CSOs slip into the background of the analysis, whereas I wanted them to be in the foreground.

On which note, I know from my literature review that whilst the roles that civil society actors play in transition are characterised by interdependencies (see CHAPTER 4, section 4.3) civil society itself is replete with networks (see CHAPTER 3, section 3.2). So, rather than studying the roles played by cases of single, unconnected CSOs, I investigated them in the context of their social networks and interactions. This allowed me to explore both factors that are internal to the focal organisations, as well as external factors such as the ‘substantial connections’ between organisations and the ways in which they are ‘formally related’ (Sayer 1992: 88-89). Furthermore, whilst I was able to investigate a small number of organisations intensively, this design also allowed me to extend the scope of my study to encompass a larger number of organisations, giving it greater breadth. It is through this combination of depth and breadth that I will be able to compare systems level (or ‘spectator’) views with actor level views of the situation in the following chapters.

5.1.1 Defining and selecting cases

I used the following basic criteria for inclusion of organisations in the study, in order to ensure a firm ground for comparison (the four indicative qualities relating to the third criterion are taken from my review of the civil society literatures, see CHAPTER 3, section 3.2). To be included, organisations must:

³⁶ For instance, I could opt to study cases of activities (such as farming), initiatives (such as specific campaigns), organisations, social networks, or socio-technical configurations (such as the organic niche or the biotech regime), and so on.

1. Seek change towards sustainability
2. Spend a significant amount of their time working on food or farming (i.e. excluding groups that spend only a little of their time on food and farming)
3. Be situated within civil society, as indicated by these qualities:
 - a. Non-state (governed and managed independently)
 - b. Non-profit-distributing (not rent-seeking, no shareholders)³⁷
 - c. For public benefit/interest
 - d. Degree of voluntarism

In terms of the exact number of cases that I included in my study, I used a tripartite design. In practice, I defined my cases by first selecting three ‘focal organisations’, and then by subsequently identifying a small sample of other organisations with which they have substantial connections (which I call ‘linked organisations’). The focal organisation in case one – Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch (T&PH) Community Farm – appeared from initial desk-based research and pilot interviews to clearly demonstrate the ‘grassroots innovation’ role, whereas the focal organisation in case two – the Fife Diet – appeared to clearly demonstrate the niche development role, and the focal organisation in case three – the Soil Association – appeared to clearly demonstrate both the normative contestation *and* regime reform roles (see Figure 12 below). Although I was aware at the outset that each of the focal organisations may additionally encompass other roles besides those that they were selected for, my rationale for choosing these three was so that, between them, I would have coverage of all four roles, even if there wasn’t a one-to-one mapping of roles to organisations³⁸.

³⁷ However, following the orthodoxy in defining civil society, an exception is made for cooperatives and mutuals, which fail the criterion of non-profit-distribution (Deakin, 2001; Edwards, 2004; Walzer, 2005; Garton, 2009). The organisations that fall into these two groups constitute a significant subsector operating in conjunction with non-profit groups (Garton, 2009).

³⁸ Initially I had four cases (one case for each clearly-identified role). However, one of the cases (the case that I had selected for the normative contestation role, the Tescopoly Alliance) stopped operating and there were access issues. But by then it was clear that the case that I had selected for the regime reform role (the Soil Association) was also engaged in activities that embodied the normative contestation role, thus avoiding the need for finding a fourth replacement case. Moreover, I felt that sticking with these three cases could bring initially unintended benefits. For instance, three cases seemed to be more feasible than four within

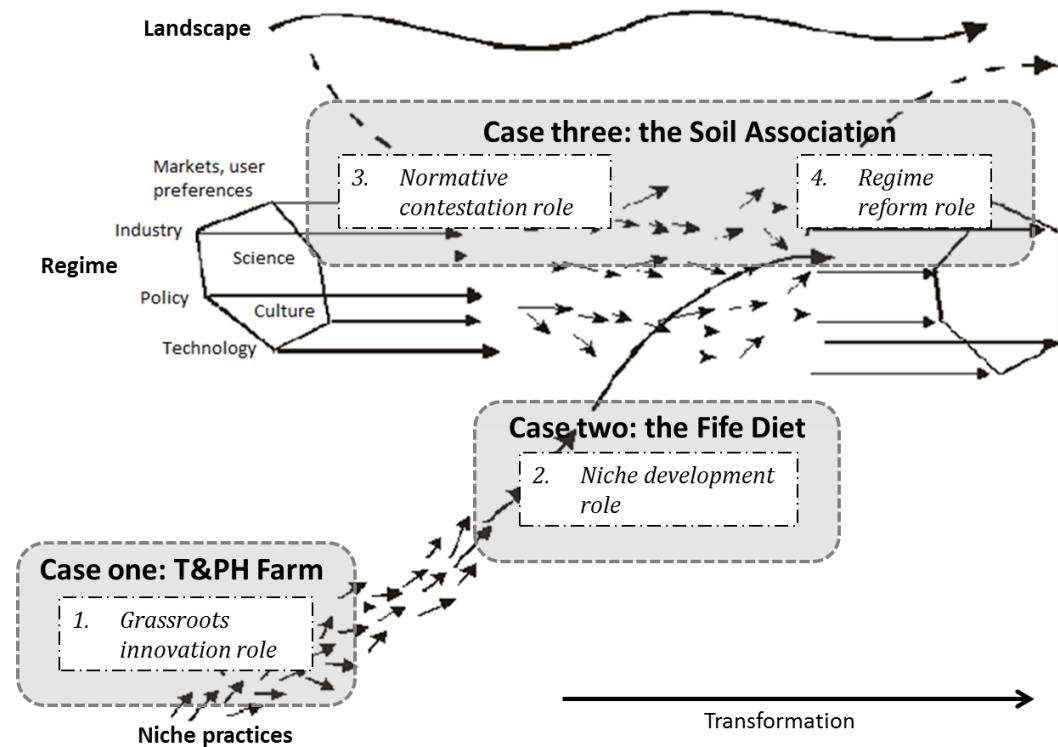


Figure 12. Theoretical basis for selection of focal organisations for the three cases

In terms of the practicalities of identifying suitable organisations, I started by building a database of information on possible cases through a combination of desk research, a small number of expert interviews, and participant observation at relevant events, as well as making use of the Food Issues Census (Food Ethics Council 2011) database, to which I had access. I then applied the criteria above and checked that the organisations that I selected were capable and willing to participate in the research.

Once I had identified the three focal organisations, I then used a snowballing method to identify the linked organisations. Ensuring that all the organisations in the study satisfied

the time and budgetary constraints of my PhD scholarship, whilst the tripartite design helped me to avoid or at least move beyond simple dichotomies in my cross-case analysis (such as might result from studying an even number of cases). In addition, having one case that seemed to clearly embody two roles emerged as an interesting finding in itself that I felt was worth pursuing in depth. Thus, having one double case meant that I could afford to go into depth in exploring the consequences of combining roles within an organisation.

the above criteria (including the linked organisations), made it possible for me to derive carefully qualified generalisations from across the cases – i.e. about CSOs from within the UK food and farming sub-sector of civil society³⁹, in addition to the abstractions that I made by exploring and comparing the cases *as cases*. But rather than selecting linked organisations at random, I was strategic in my choices of which links to follow, to ensure that there was a degree of variety within each case. Specifically, I looked for variety in terms of 1) the kinds of relationships that they have with the focal organisation, and 2) in terms of the following dimensions of the linked organisations, which are taken from the Food Issues Census segmentation framework (Food Ethics Council 2011): longevity (indicated by the date founded), size (indicated by the value of incoming resources, number of employees, and number of supporters), geography (indicated by the remit of operations and location of HQ), and structure (indicated by the legal form, governance arrangements, and trading status). See Table 7, at the end of this chapter. Although I cannot be representative of the diversity of UK civil society, by seeking to maximise the variety within each case, and across the cases, I was aiming to minimise accidental selectivity bias⁴⁰ (Dexter 1970: 39-40).

Another very basic aspect of the research design that I have not yet discussed is the temporality of the study. Given the nature of my enquiry, I might have chosen to do historical research, with the aim of creating case histories describing the unfolding of events and relations over extended periods. Alternatively, I might have tried to examine changes through the short interval of my own study – or to anticipate the future by projecting trends or modelling scenarios. However, I have chosen instead to focus on a more static picture founded generally in the current situation. This avoids the risk of over-interpreting contingent developments over short intervals, or of trying to reconcile past

³⁹ For instance, in CHAPTER 10, section 10.2, I state that: “evidence from across my three case studies suggests that CSOs from within the UK food and farming sub-sector of civil society relate to these roles in a multitude of different ways that do not necessarily fall into one-to-one mappings (of actors to roles) or simple phases (from role to role)”.

⁴⁰ Selectivity bias can easily result from using a snowballing technique, especially when interviewing members of an elite community, as I will be (see later in this chapter).

pictures and contemporary patterns accessed through differing historical and sociological methods.

Though it remains the case that the concept of ‘transition to sustainability’ is fundamentally diachronic, I would argue – following Brown et al. (2000) – that it is also (crucially) a discourse about the future that is created in the present, with recourse to the past. In this view, we can only access the past and future through the microcosm of the present (Michael 2000: 21), and a focus on contemporary patterns is justified.

Moreover, as I explained in chapter one, my interest is not in uncovering the extent to which a transition to sustainability is achieved, but rather to explore how it is sought. So in asking what roles CSOs play in transition, I am not asking what impact they have had (or will have) in measurable amounts or timeframes, but rather what processes they are a part of, how they relate to these processes and what meanings they attribute to them. Thus, in each of my case studies I have taken seriously the ways by which past experiences and narratives about the past shape present and future actions, as well as the ways by which narratives about the future inform experiences of the past and present. However, my main focus in following chapters will be on understanding these things as they relate to the situation as I found it during the course of my fieldwork, for I am exploring a ‘transition in the making’, rather than examining a past transition *ex-post* (Elzen, Geels et al. 2011).

5.1.2 Data collection

Before going into the details of what types of data I sought and how I found them, I must say a word about how I operationalised the concept of ‘roles in transition’ and the four roles in the framework. As I will go on to discuss in section 5.2.2 below, I used the core characteristics of the roles that I developed in CHAPTER 4 as indicators. But in terms of how to identify relevant observable effects and outcomes of the different characteristics, my strategy was to investigate the following kinds of phenomena in a fairly comprehensive manner: 1) the specific activities that they engage in, 2) their stated

intentions, and 3) the relationships that they have with other organisations. In essence, that's what they do, why they do it, and who they do it with.

In terms of how selective, or not, I was about the data that I gathered, I took the following approach. I started by researching the focal organisations in each case, seeking out every source of information that I could find that pertained to their activities, relationships and intentions. I used a range of methods for collecting data, including direct and participant observation, in-depth interviews, email correspondence and desk research to gather documents, secondary data and other relevant texts. I started analysing the data that I gathered from the outset, both in order to identify linked groups and to come upon a more focussed protocol for researching the linked groups – i.e. so that I could get the most relevant data in a less labour-intensive way. This was important since I only conducted one interview per linked group, whereas I conducted multiple interviews in connection with each focal organisation. In Table 6 below I have provided a summary of the different sources that I accessed during my fieldwork.

Table 6. Data overview

Methods	Sources
Participant observation	Observational notes and fieldwork diary, attendance of 40+ sector events and guided tours of Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch farms
Interviewing	36 individual interviews (average two hours duration) presenting perspectives from 18 organisations
Document retrieval	Market reports and UK policy, civil society and food industry literature; organisations' internal documentation (strategic reports, governing documents, annual returns etc.) and external communications (pamphlets, emails and web pages); online news media (identified using Google Alert)
Literature review	Review of historical studies and other secondary sources

The most significant contribution of primary data to the case materials was derived from interviewing. In terms of whom specifically I interviewed within each organisation, I had two different strategies. Firstly, for the focal organisations, I conducted interviews with a range of individuals that work or volunteer for the organisation, attempting to encompass

both those individuals who are positioned at high strategic and operational levels within the organisation, as well as those at lower and intermediate levels. I also sought out those involved with different parts of the organisations, in order to achieve maximum coverage of the organisation's activities. Secondly, for the linked organisations, I conducted interviews with the single individual who had the greatest degree of strategic and operational oversight in a given organisation – except in a couple of cases where this was not possible due to problems with access, in which case the next best person was sought. Due to the confidentiality agreement with these individuals I cannot name them or their job roles in connection to their organisations or any information that they supplied. However, in order to provide the reader with a feeling for this, see Appendix C, which lists all the job positions of the various interviewees in each case.

Specific individual interview schedules were developed in advance of each interview. However, a general schedule of key questions was developed from a limited number of pilot interviews, and then adapted to suit each context (see Appendix A). All my interview materials (including introductory emails, consent forms, information sheets and question schedules) were assessed by the University ethics committee before I commenced fieldwork.

I conducted all the interviews in person and carried out a day or two of desk research into each organisation and individual that I was interviewing in advance. This ensured that I was well-informed from the outset, thus making it easier to build rapport with my interviewees and get the most out of each interview (Dexter 1970). This also contributed to my bank of information about the organisations. In addition, rather than making notes during the interviews, I audio-recorded them (with permission), so that I was free to listen actively as they unfolded (Kvale 1996). Though I asked permission to re-interview all my interviewees, in actual fact I only re-interviewed one individual out of 35. In terms of the style of interviewing that I used, all interviews were semi-structured, covering around ten key questions in reasonable depth, but leaving plenty of time to probe and go deeper in places. I started with basic factual questions and aimed to build rapport quickly, before asking some open questions, allowing the interviewees to guide the discussion, and then

focussing in again with some more directed questions to ensure that I had the material that I needed.

As I have already indicated and will go on to show in the next section, my fieldwork and analysis overlapped in time considerably, and I iterated back and forth between different methods, sometimes using multiple methods in combination (e.g. making field notes, conducting interviews and retrieving documents during a single site visit). In this way, I made the space in my study design for adaptation and sensitivity to the research context, which at times guided me as much as my research questions.

5.2 Analysis and interpretation

Although I primarily used the word ‘abstractions’ in the introduction to this chapter, I don’t intend to limit myself to the pursuit of only one kind of conceptual output from my research. Instead, following Coffey and Atkinson (1996), I deliberately carried out the analysis and interpretation of my empirical materials in a way that allowed me to stay open to generating different kinds of knowledge, including tentative explorations of my data, as well as more substantive abstractions and qualified generalisations.

In relation to my first research question – concerning the distinguishable kinds of roles that civil society actors play in transitions – I sought to augment the RIT framework by generalising from across my cases about the kinds of elements, actors and (technical, social and cognitive) practices associated with the performance of each of the four roles. However, with respect to my second research question – concerning the ways that individual organisations relate to the roles, concurrently and over time, and to each other – I searched for powerful and reliable abstractions from within my cases, to challenge the framework with embodied examples. And as for my third research question – concerning the intentions of the individuals involved – I explored commonalities and differences both between the views of different individuals (to challenge the uniform intentionality proscribed to these actors by the RIT framework), and between their views and the roles in the framework (to challenge the validity of the roles insofar as they can be taken to reflect the intentions of the actors involved).

In terms of how, in practice, I did all this, my approach encompassed the following strategies, which I progressed through in three main phases; though – as with my fieldwork – I iterated back and forth between them and at times made use of multiple strategies concurrently.

5.2.1 Phase one: opening up the cases

My first priority as I began to handle my empirical materials was to open up the cases. In this phase I made a double movement from the material – at turns both reducing and complicating the raw data (Coffey and Atkinson 1996: 28-32). In a way, many of the strategies in this phase were strategies for discovering the unexpected, as a complement to discovering the relevant elements based on established theory, which were the focus of the next phase.

During this initial phase I listened through my interview tapes, familiarising myself with the different actors, elements, issues and other themes discussed, and reflecting on these and taking notes as I went. I later transcribed them verbatim, so that I could read through the transcripts in full, returning to them several times to find new items of interest that I overlooked first time round (though having verbatim transcripts was also useful later on when I was looking for illustrative sections of speech to quote at length in my thesis). As I read over my transcripts I annotated them by hand, further familiarising myself with the material and the recurrent themes and significant relationships contained within it, raising questions and considering possible answers as I went. Likewise, I annotated the vast majority of materials relating to all the organisations in each case, including documents, fieldnotes and other media, creating memos of the observations that I made in a research journal.

During this phase I also uploaded all materials into Nvivo, which I used to identify all the CSOs that my three focal organisations interact with, and to select from amongst them the linked organisations. To do this I coded all the organisations named and then systematically investigated their relations to the focal organisation in the relevant case, using the criteria described in section 5.1.1 above to make the selection. I also used Nvivo

to create detailed inductive (in-vivo) codebooks for one key interview from each focal organisation, choosing in each case the interviewee with the best overview of their organisation (Bazeley 2007). This allowed me to build up a detailed picture of the current situation within each of the three focal organisations, directly from the material and without applying a theoretical filter, so that I identify specific lines of evidence gathering to focus on in subsequent interviews. Although I was already sensitised to the theoretical concepts from the literatures that I reviewed, I did not seek to apply them in this phase of the analysis. Instead I aimed to gain an understanding of the relationships between the different actors, elements, issues and other themes that I discovered in my initial reading of the case materials, for instance by classifying them as either formal or substantial, internal (necessary) or external (contingent), to the focal organisation (Sayer 1992).

In addition to producing these codebooks and a research journal full of observations, questions and hypotheses during this phase, I also produced different visualisations of my data. First, I produced social worlds/arenas maps (Clarke 2005) to help me understand the substantial and formal relations between the organisations in the study. The maps describe both (1) “patterns of collective commitments” (Clarke 2005: 110) that the organisations make within different social worlds and arenas, and through which – following Sayer (1992) – they are ‘formally’ related (represented by the curved lines and bubbles that encircle the organisations), and (2) the presence of substantial connections between them (represented by straight connecting lines).

And second, I produced different kinds of visual models (Bazeley 2007) to help me think about the next phases of analysis. These models were not developed into finished products as they were intended only to aid the development of my thinking (for instance, about how the concept of ‘roles’ might appear in concrete situations, e.g. as activities, and about how to analyse and compare narratives about the intentions behind those activities).

5.2.2 Phase two: analysing the cases using closed codes

Once I was satisfied that I had enough empirical materials, my cases were sufficiently bounded, and I had opened up a range of different lines of enquiry that linked my research questions to the raw data, I began the next phase.

During this phase I first used Nvivo to apply theoretical codes from the RIT framework to all my case materials. My primary focus was to identify activities that typify each of the four roles. However, I also considered the kinds of techniques and technologies, relationships with state and market actors, and styles of governance and management that are involved in the performance of the four roles. In practice, I used the definitions that I created in CHAPTER 4 to identify the core characteristics displayed by organisations playing each role; e.g. for grassroots innovation the characteristics were novelty, responsiveness and protection (see section 4.1.1). In Nvivo I created nodes (i.e. codes) for each of these characteristics (see Table 8, at the end of this chapter) and coded examples of activities that embody them from my data, making note of any conditionalities that might undermine or reinforce the validity of my coding decisions. As I coded the data, I ensured that the connections between the activities and the specific organisations carrying them out were maintained. However, given the extensive exploration of the data that I had already undertaken during phase one, I did not, at this later stage, create additional codes for unexpected change-oriented activities that didn't correspond to any of the roles from the RIT framework. My rationale for this decision was that I could rely on my earlier exploration of the data to uncover any unexpected activities.

Next, I used Nvivo to pull out sections of my data that contained narratives about the intentions behind those activities. Specifically, I looked for narratives about the organisations' intended impacts, the different roles that the organisations play in wider processes of change (not using the RIT framework, but interpreting the concept of roles literally), the desired outcomes of their work – especially the properties they associate with sustainable food systems (imagined or real), and the most likely drivers of change

towards sustainability. I created in-vivo⁴¹ codes using the following questions as a guide, and then carried out a thematic analysis of the data that I coded in relation to the second question (Boyatzis 1998):

1. To what extent do the organisations' intended impacts and the perceived roles that the organisations play in wider change processes – as presented in official documentation and/or espoused by individuals from within the organisations – correspond to the roles in the framework?
2. What degree of similarity/agreement is there amongst (a) the properties that the organisations' associate with sustainable food systems, as presented in official documentation and/or espoused by individuals from within the organisations, and (b) those individuals' espoused theories concerning the most likely drivers of transition towards sustainability?

Once I completed these rounds of coding and analysis, having coded all my data sources, I then moved on to the next phase: interpreting the cases.

5.2.3 Phase three: interpreting the cases

The final phase of my study involved three linked processes: synthesis of the case materials, comparison of the cases, and enfolding the study within relevant theoretical literatures. Each of these processes entailed exploring, abstracting from, and generalising about my data.

First, in the process of physically writing up each case, I made a number of decisions about what to represent and what to omit. Some of these choices, such as deciding which illustrative examples of phenomena to represent in my narrative – several of which may be embedded within a single case (Yin 2009) – were only made through the process of writing up. However, others were made in advance. For instance, when quoting from my interviews, I decided to use standard grammatical conventions for written text to represent the speech of interviewees. However, I also used two more technical codes.

⁴¹ In-vivo codes are codes that aim to summarise and signpost relevant parts of the empirical material, rather than being instances of previously-defined concepts.

Firstly, I used “[...]” within sections of speech to indicate the omission of a portion of speech (e.g. with the effect of transforming the phrase “Tablehurst farm is located somewhere in Forest Row” to “Tablehurst farm is [...] in Forest Row”). Second, I used “--” within sections of speech to indicate that an interviewee did not complete the sentence that he or she was midway through speaking. Oftentimes this was indicative of either a halt in the flow of the conversation, a second attempt to explain something, or a change of subject (or a combination thereof).

Moreover, in each of the three case study chapters (CHAPTER 7, CHAPTER 8 and CHAPTER 9) I chose to organise my presentation of the case materials into the following sections: 1) activities, 2) relationships and 3) intentions, with a separate introduction to the cases being provided in CHAPTER 6. The first section of the case study chapters is where I have reported on my theoretical coding of the case materials. The second section is where I have presented my observations about the substantial and formal relationships between the organisations in the study. And the third and final section is where I have presented my exploration of the intentions behind the organisations’ activities (including the results of my thematic analysis). The function of CHAPTER 6, on the other hand, is to provide enough contextual information about the organisations within each case to enable sensible comparison of the three cases.

The first section of the case study chapters, which pertains to the organisations’ activities, contains the most material and is of greatest significance to the study in terms of theory development. In this section I have considered the extent to which the various organisations’ activities are characteristic of the four roles in the RIT framework, providing detailed descriptions of the focal organisations’ activities and explaining how and why they embody the core characteristics of each role. But in contrast to the other three sections, which have a standard structure, in section one there are noticeable differences in the way that I have presented each case. This is because I have not represented *absences* of activities that characterise the different roles. Rather, I have only written up material pertaining to the *presence* of activities that characterise the roles. Thus, given that the three cases were in the first place selected according to the contrasting roles that

the focal organisations seemed to enact (i.e. the focal organisation in each case appeared from initial desk research to play different roles, see section 5.1.1 above), this led to an asymmetrical instantiation of the framework⁴². Nonetheless, in the following three chapters I have provided visualisations of the data that represent *both* presence and absence of activity, thus enabling me to compare the cases side-by-side at a later stage.

Moreover, given that one of the roles in the RIT framework (the reform role) is less theoretically developed than the other roles, I took a slightly different approach to writing about activities that embody it, i.e. in comparison to the way that I wrote about activities that embody the other three roles. Specifically, I allowed myself to interpret the empirical material more openly, seeking not only to critically apply the definitions of the core characteristics of this role (CHAPTER 4, section 4.2.2), but also to deepen and extend them where possible.

Once I had written up the cases in this way, I then moved on to the process of comparing them and searching across them for answers to my three research questions (which I will present in CHAPTER 10). And finally, once that task was done, I went about the job of relating my findings to relevant theoretical literatures and addressing the policy- and practice-related aims of my study (which I will present in CHAPTER 11).

5.3 Conclusions

In this chapter I have made certain methodological choices relating to the design of this study. I chose to focus on organised groups within civil society, or Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), as the principal subjects of my research. I chose to investigate three classes of phenomena associated with CSOs: their activities, their espoused intentions, and their relationships with each other. I chose to use a tripartite case study design that has enabled me to analyse and compare these phenomena at different levels of structure, and to empirically test existing scholarly ideas concerning the distinguishable roles played by civil society actors within sustainability transitions. Moreover, I chose to use a range of

⁴² In other words, I did not go through each role and characteristic in turn, because doing so would produce empty sub-sections where none of the activities identified empirically related to those roles.

different tools and techniques for identifying, selecting, collating, analysing, interpreting and representing my case materials. It was my aim by doing so that I would be able to skilfully confront my own theoretical assumptions with evidence of the roles played by specific civil society actors, as they are constructed through practice and self-defined in both formal and informal discourse.

In the next chapter (CHAPTER 6), I will introduce my three cases, thereby paving the way for the succeeding three chapters (CHAPTER 7, CHAPTER 8 and CHAPTER 9), in which I will present each case in the manner described above. Then, in CHAPTER 10, I will compare and interpret my empirical findings from across the three cases, and in the final chapter (CHAPTER 11), I will draw all my findings together and highlight the most significant contributions of my research.

Table 7. Longevity, size, geography and structure of all CSOs in the study (subset of criteria used for case selection). No shading indicates organisation in case I; pale shading, case II; dark shading, case III; diagonal lines, multiple case association. Ordering reflects size of incoming resources, from lowest at the top to highest at the bottom.

Name abbr.	Date founded	Incoming resources	#Staff FTE	#Supporters	Supporter description	Remit	Location of HQ	Legal form	Gov. form	Trading status
TFR	2007	none	0	325	People with web profiles	Local	Forest Row, East Sussex	Uninc	Charity	No
BDAC	2011	n/a	4	150	Graduates	National-int'l	Forest Row, East Sussex	CLG	Charity	No
Nourish	2009	none	0	1,500	People with web profiles	National	Edinburgh	Uninc	Vol Assn	No
FD	2007	£155,596	2.4	3000	Members	Local	Burntisland, Fife	Uninc	Vol Assn	No
GK	2010	£219,327	4	700	Email subscribers	Local	Kirkcaldy, Fife	CLG	Charity	No
FEC	1998	£236,032	3.3	5000	Email subscribers	National-int'l	Brighton, East Sussex	CLG	Charity	No
BDA	1929	£265,300	6	1060	Licensees and supporters	National-int'l	Stroud, Glous.	Uninc	Charity	Yes
Grow Com	1993	£447,910	20 [®]	700	Households in box scheme	Local	Hackney, London	CLG	Soc Ent	Yes
M-CAN	2009	£555,244	25 [®]	189	Email subscribers	Local	Moffat, Dumfries and Galloway	CLG	Charity	Yes
T&PH	1995	£700,000	20	600	Shareholders	Local	Forest Row, East Sussex	IPS	Co-op	Yes
BDLT	2011	£1,050,000*	0.2	30	Shareholders	National-int'l	Stroud, Glous.	IPS	Com Ben	No
Sustain	1999	£2,076,111	26	100	Organisations	National	Central London	CLG	Charity	No
GO	1954	£3,230,513	78	33,000	Members of the public	National-int'l	Coventry	CLG	Charity	Yes
Unicorn	1995	£4,126,788	40	40	Worker members	Local	Manchester	IPS	Co-op	Yes
CIWF	1967	£4,983,896	56.75	41,653	Active donors (donated in last 3yrs)	National-int'l	Godalming, Surrey	CLG	Charity	Yes
SA	1946	£11,416,000	185	24,000	Members and supporters	National-int'l	Bristol	CLG	Charity	Yes
MSC	1997	£12,794,336	74	600	Fisheries in MSC program	National-int'l	Central London	CLG	Charity	Yes
WWF-UK	1961	£57,756,000	300	530,000	Members, adopters, campaigners, supporters	National-int'l	Godalming, Surrey	CLG	Charity	No

Table 8. Theoretical codes used in the analysis

Role	Definition	Characteristics
Grassroots innovation	<i>Experimentation, in the protective spaces of civil society niches, with novel, more sustainable configurations of food provisioning that respond to local situations and the interests and values of the communities involved.</i>	<i>(1) Novelty: the organisation applies novel socio-technical arrangements and tools. Though they are far from being entirely new ‘inventions’, these arrangements and tools often display novelty at the level of technical, social and cognitive practices, i.e. in terms of how they are developed, deployed, appreciated and governed, in comparison to those arrangements and tools that are common within incumbent food regimes.</i>
		<i>(2) Responsiveness: the organisation’s activities are framed in response to its local situation and the interests or values of those involved. It is therefore ‘rooted’ to its particular context and is capable of generating direct sustainability benefits in its locality.</i>
		<i>(3) Protection: the organisation enjoys a degree of ‘shielding’ from full exposure to regime selection pressures. This may be the result of people valuing the organisation according to alternative measures, such as the extent to which it addresses divergent notions of the public good, e.g. safety, nutritional value, social and environmental sustainability.</i>
Niche development	<i>Facilitation of learning and capacity-building around grassroots innovations, thus aiding the strategic development (including up-scaling and replication) of alternative systems of food provision.</i>	<i>(1) Aggregation: the aggregation of lessons from individual projects that practice alternative socio-technical systems of food provision so as to generate niche-level, or ‘second-order’, learning.</i>
		<i>(2) Infrastructure creation: the creation of institutional infrastructures for the niche, which typically involves building social networks that span multiple local milieus.</i>
		<i>(3) Co-ordination: the co-ordination and framing of local-level activities, which may be expressed through the articulation of visions for the future of the niche.</i>
		<i>(4) Brokering: the management of partnerships between grassroots and regime actors and the encouragement of outsiders to become actively involved in niche development.</i>

Role	Definition	Characteristics
Normative contestation	Application of normative pressure to the public, policy-makers and food industry, which undermines existing unsustainable practices and shifts favour towards alternative systems – thereby destabilising incumbent food regimes.	(1) Legitimation : the identification and development of focused and emotionally resonant messaging that draws on socially-determined criteria of legitimacy which can be used to reinforce or undermine claims about alternative and incumbent food systems (i.e. in campaigning and lobbying).
		(2) Campaigning : the use of focused and emotionally resonant messaging to either (1) intensify public dissatisfaction with the incumbent regime, for instance by campaigning against the use of products, calling for boycotts, or naming-and-shaming companies and industries, or (2) increase public support for alternative systems and shift consumer preference in favour of niche technologies, for instance by providing moral and ethical imperatives, evidence of benefits and demonstration of viability.
		(3) Lobbying : the use of a range of messages and tactics to persuade policymakers at various levels to act in ways that favour alternative systems and/or disfavour the incumbent regime, for instance by adapting policy frameworks, changing legislation, banning products, or offering political support for alternatives.
Regime reform	Encouragement of regime actors, including mainstream businesses and public bodies, to adopt and embed more sustainable configurations of technologies, practices and organisational arrangements, thus leading to the reform and re-orientation of incumbent food regimes.	(1) Embedding : the embedding of reforms which entails the translation/alteration of (a) grassroots innovations into acceptable formats and their incorporation within regime contexts, and/or (b) regime contexts to make them fit better with grassroots innovations and other, more sustainable, configurations.
		(2) Negotiation : the negotiation of ongoing re-orientation processes which entails (a) the careful management of relationships with both niche and regime actors – i.e. building trust and confidence in the presence of sharp technical, social, or cognitive divides, as well as (b) responding judiciously to opportunities for harnessing alignment between synergistic developments at niche, regime and landscape levels.

CHAPTER 6. Introduction to the cases

This chapter provides an introduction to the three cases identified as a result of the methodology described in CHAPTER 5. It includes an overview of the focal organisation in each case; a brief description of its geography and cultural milieu; and an introduction to the linked organisations.

6.1 Case I: Tablehurst & Plaw Hatch

Tablehurst & Plaw Hatch Community Farm (T&PH), the focal organisation in this case, is legally constituted as an Industrial and Provident Society (IPS) located in Forest Row, East Sussex. The IPS, which is known informally as ‘the co-op’, owns two farm businesses (Tablehurst Farm and Plaw Hatch Farm). The co-op exists primarily to ensure that both farms are governed co-operatively (by the community) and run biodynamically (by the farmers that live and work on them). The land, however, is held by a separate charitable trust that is supportive of biodynamic agriculture (St Anthony’s Trust).

Founded in 1995, the co-op is owned by a membership of over 600 shareholders, many of which are residents of Forest Row and the surrounding area. Both of the farms, however, have a history of biodynamic management with strong ties to the local community going back to the late 1970s. Between the two farms, they currently employ around 20 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) members of staff to handle a range of operations, including various non-agricultural activities. In addition, six of the co-op members serve voluntarily on Tablehurst’s management group, and the co-op’s voluntary directors are involved in the strategic development and financial management of both farms. When referring to ‘T&PH’ or ‘the organisation’ in the following sections, I am talking about the co-op, including its owners, as well as the two farms including their staff, as a single entity. However, at other times I will refer to ‘the co-op’ separately, in which case I am just talking about the IPS ownership and governing body. Likewise I will at times refer to each of the two farms separately.

6.1.1 The geography and cultural milieu of Tablehurst & Plaw Hatch

According to the UK's Biodynamic Agriculture Association (the BDA), biodynamic agriculture – which is underpinned by the philosophy of Rudolph Steiner, known as 'Anthroposophy' – “seeks to improve the nutritional value of food and the sustainability of land by nurturing the vitality of the soil through the practical application of a holistic and spiritual understanding of nature and the human being” (Biodynamic Agriculture Association 2013a). Demeter International estimates that the number of biodynamic farms in existence globally grew from around 1000 in 1931 (Demeter-International 2013) to 4,800 in 2013, owing largely to a sharp increase in the last decade (Demeter-International 2012). In terms of the situation in the UK, less than 0.05% of all active farms were certified as biodynamic in 2013⁴³, most of which were much smaller than T&PH (Demeter-International 2012, Defra 2013). Moreover, the numbers of UK-based biodynamic farms has been in slow decline over recent years, falling from 112 to 99 between 2004 and 2013 (Biodynamic Agriculture Association 2004)⁴⁴.

Nonetheless, Forest Row is a hub of anthroposophical activity. Also located in the village are several other organisations, such as Brambletye Fruit Farm, the Biodynamic Agricultural College (BDAC), Michael Hall School, and Seasons shop and café (see Figure 13 below), which follow and promote anthroposophy and have close links to the Anthroposophical Society of the UK and the global centre of Anthroposophy, the Goetheanum in Switzerland. For instance Michael Hall, which was originally established in 1925, is the oldest Steiner school in the UK (of around 40 in total) and one of the oldest in the world; the BDAC, on the other hand, is the UK's only educational establishment that offers accredited agricultural training which is aligned with biodynamic principles and practices.

⁴³ There were only 99 biodynamic farms in 2013, compared to around 222,000 active farms in the same year.

⁴⁴ Historical data indicating when the growth in numbers of biodynamic farms in the UK peaked is not currently available.

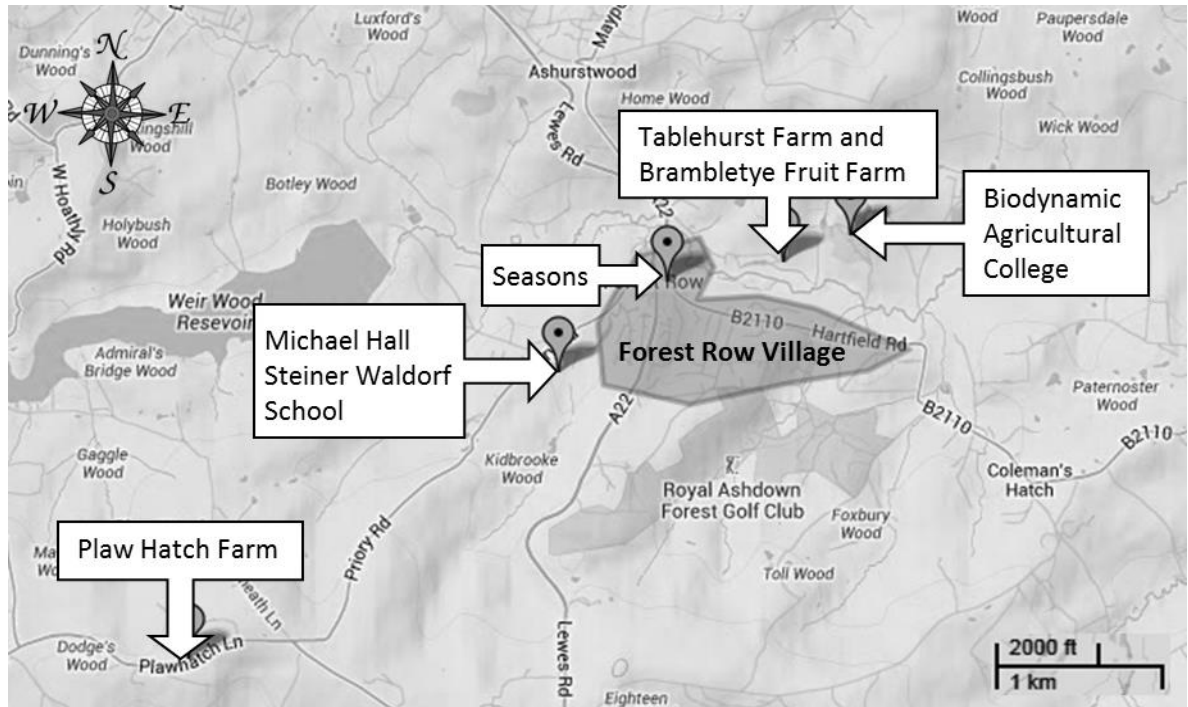


Figure 13. Map showing the location of the two farms and the village of Forest Row

In addition to being located within the geographical milieu of Forest Row with its anthroposophical connections, Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch farms are only 25 miles from the city of Brighton and Hove, and 33 miles from central London. With London and the South East of England being home to the UK's largest organic consumer markets, this means that the farm is well placed for attracting custom to its shops. Moreover, the city of Brighton and Hove is home to one of the UK's first and most exemplary metropolitan area strategic food partnerships, the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership, and a thriving community of ethical and alternative food businesses. It is also a centre of 'green' politics and activism more generally, with the UK's first green Member of Parliament, Caroline Lucas, voted into Parliament in 2010. All of these factors could in theory combine to make the wider geographical milieu surrounding Forest Row especially supportive of T&PH.

As mentioned above, the two farms that sit within T&PH are owned and governed co-operatively by a community of individuals that includes both local residents and people from further afield. Hence, the farms are not only positioned culturally, politically and historically within the biodynamic movement, but also within other related social

movements including the co-operative movement, the allotment movement, the care farming movement, and – in particular – the emergent CSA movement (Ravenscroft, Moore et al. 2012). According to Ravenscroft et al. (2012: 3), CSA is defined as “mutual support between farmers (or growers) and consumers in which people invest in a neighbouring farm or garden in return for a share in the harvest”. Furthermore, they suggest that CSA is an expression of food citizenship that is underpinned by three interrelated core values: care (for both people and planet), co-operation and enterprise. According to research carried out by the Soil Association, only 80 CSA schemes were operating in the UK in 2011 (Soil Association 2011a).

6.1.2 The linked organisations

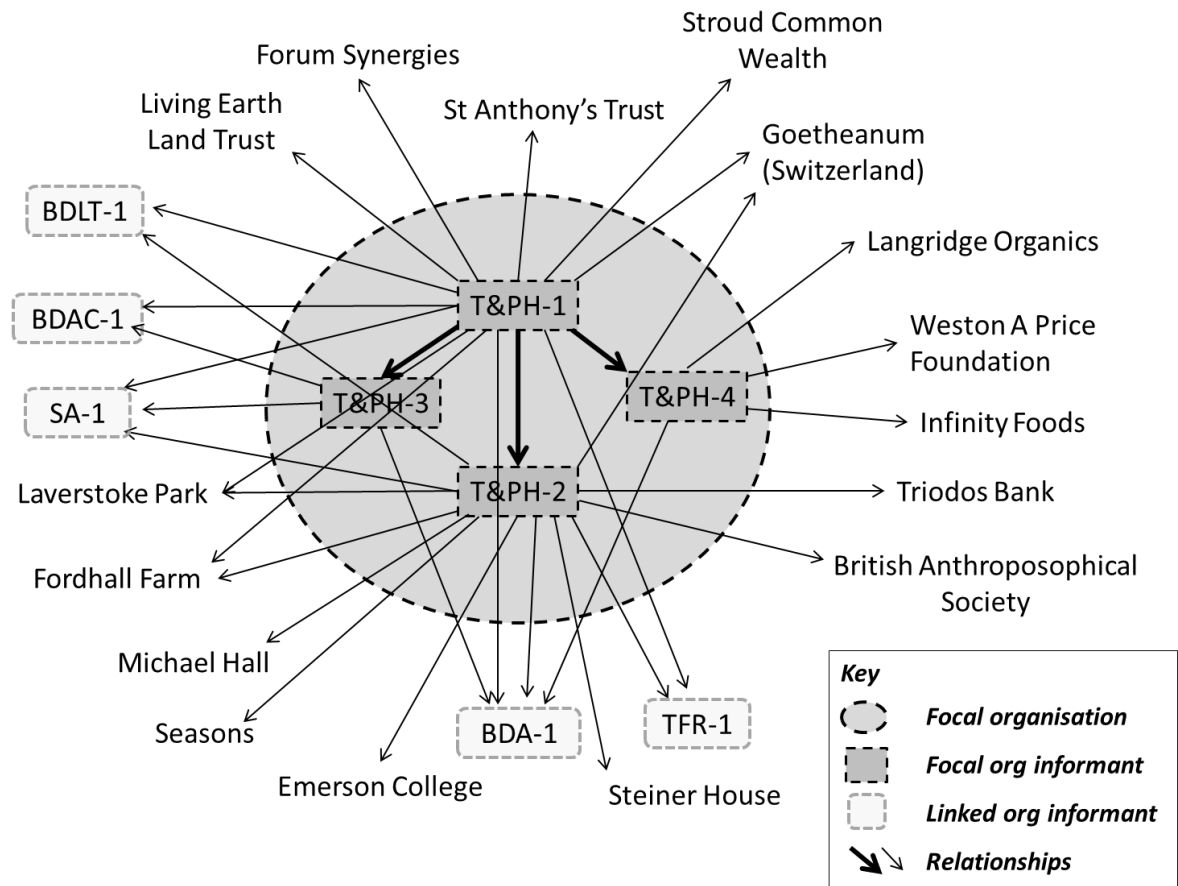


Figure 14. Network diagram showing the nine individuals interviewed in connection with this case (they are all given code names). The diagram also shows relationships between T&PH and numerous other CSOs, which were discovered through interviewing individuals from T&PH.

Figure 14 above shows the connections between the four individuals from T&PH that were interviewed as part of this case, and the single interviewee from each of the linked organisations in the case. For an explanation of the status of linked organisations with respect to the overall case study design see chapter five, section 5.1.1.

6.1.2.1 The Biodynamic Agricultural College

The Biodynamic Agricultural College (BDAC) is a limited company with charitable status. It is located just outside the village of Forest Row, East Sussex, adjacent to Tablehurst Farm. It was founded in 2010 when the Biodynamic Agricultural Association (BDA) took over the delivery of the biodynamic agriculture and horticulture diplomas that were previously delivered by Emerson College on the same site. It was quickly made independent from the BDA and Emerson – though it still retains strong links to the BDA – and since then the college has developed the training that it offers into a range of options that are delivered partly through the college itself, partly through ten separate accredited biodynamic training centres throughout the UK (Tablehurst Farm and Plaw Hatch Farm make up two of the ten), and partly through a distance learning programme. The BDAC employs an average of 4 FTE staff and has produced over 150 graduates.

6.1.2.2 The Biodynamic Agricultural Association

The Biodynamic Agricultural Association (BDA) is an unincorporated association also with charitable status. Its offices are located in Stroud, Gloucestershire, where a number of other anthroposophical and agricultural CSOs are also clustered, including the Biodynamic Land Trust (BDLT), the Elisia Biodynamic Garden (owned by Garden Organic, see CHAPTER 9) and Stroud Community Agriculture. It was established in 1929 and has, since then, been regarded as the umbrella organisation for biodynamic agriculture in the UK. It has links to biodynamic farming at both subnational and international levels, with its own network of local groups and affiliation to the international umbrella organisations, Demeter International (for biodynamic agriculture) and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements. It currently engages in a number of related activities, ranging from an experimental breeding programme to certification and labelling of food products using the international Demeter standard. However, it is small in comparison to

other labelling organisations, employing an average of six FTE staff and having just over a thousand licensees and supporters put together.

6.1.2.3 The Biodynamic Land Trust

The Biodynamic Land Trust (BDLT) is a Community Benefit Society (CBS)⁴⁵ with charitable status. It was founded in 2011 when a single large donation made it possible to plan the buy-out of two or three pilot farms, in combination with money raised by share issues and loans. Since then it has recruited 30 shareholders and successfully completed the buy-out of the Brambletye Fields, which comprise part of the land on which Tablehurst Farm currently operates. The land is owned by the BDLT and is leased to T&PH. As well as acquiring land, the BDLT also engages in other activities that support and enable other organisations and individuals to acquire land into trusteeship so that it can be farmed biodynamically. A large part of this is research to establish a knowledge base around good practice (using farm land trust case studies), farm succession and inheritance, and legal structures for holding land. The BDLT is also currently developing avenues for disseminating this knowledge and building its professional networks so that it can connect new initiatives with people who have technical expertise and experience. In 2012 – less than a year since it was founded – the BDLT was administratively based in Stroud, Gloucestershire, from the home of its founder-director who is the only paid employee of the organisation.

6.1.2.4 Transition Forest Row

Transition Forest Row (TFR) is an unincorporated association with charitable status. It is based in the village of Forest Row, but has no physical address and is largely organised using an online platform. Founded in 2007, it had over 350 members signed up with web profiles in 2013, though only a small proportion of those were actively involved (Transition Forest Row 2013b). Of the 23 topic-related action groups within TFR, the food and land group was the most populous, having 37 members (Transition Forest Row 2013a). Since it was founded it has initiated a range of activities in and around the village and contributed

⁴⁵ CBS is a relatively new variant of the Industrial and Provident Society (IPS) legal form. There are now two IPS variants regulated by the UK's Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), the CBS and the co-operative.

towards the development of several others (e.g. the council-led indoor farmers market). Most of TFR's own activities are educational, awareness-raising and community-building events, such as live public debates, film screenings and workshops. TFR food and land group members also produced a film and accompanying guidebook to promote and aid access to fresh, seasonal produce from within a ten mile radius of the village (Moore and Cumpatescu 2009).

6.1.2.5 The Soil Association

The final linked organisation in this case, the Soil Association (SA), is one of the other focal organisations in the wider study (case III), so please refer to section 6.3 below.

6.2 Case II: The Fife Diet

The Fife Diet (FD) is a 'consumer network' (legally an unincorporated association) located in Burntisland, Fife. Founded in 2007 by husband and wife Mike and Karen Small and twelve of their friends, the organisation now has over 3000 members, the vast majority of which live in Fife or the borders (around 200 are 'friends' of the Fife Diet, meaning that they live beyond Fife). Initially an experiment in local and low-carbon eating amongst a small circle of friends, it is now an internationally-renowned initiative engaged in attempts to both broaden and deepen the level of public involvement in local food production and consumption (McCracken 2008, Blythman 2009, Fife Diet No date). In 2009 the organisation received an injection of funding that allowed it to employ a number of new staff and formalise in other ways, including the adoption of a governing document (Fife Diet 2009). There are currently seven members of staff, some if not all of whom are employed part time. When referring to 'the FD' or 'the organisation' in the following text, I'm talking about the whole thing, including the staff, members, activities and holdings.

6.2.1 The geography and cultural milieu of the Fife Diet

The Fife Diet operates as a practical project at the local scale, which broadcasts its ideas and achievements regionally, nationally and globally in attempts to stimulate and be part of a wider change network. However, the flow of ideas has not been one-way. The

concept of the '100-mile diet', which was the source of inspiration for Mike Small, the founder and director of the Fife Diet, originated in Canada. The trend has also spread to the US where, according to the BBC News Magazine, "the term "locavore" has been applied to people that eat locally-sourced food" (Rohrer 2007).

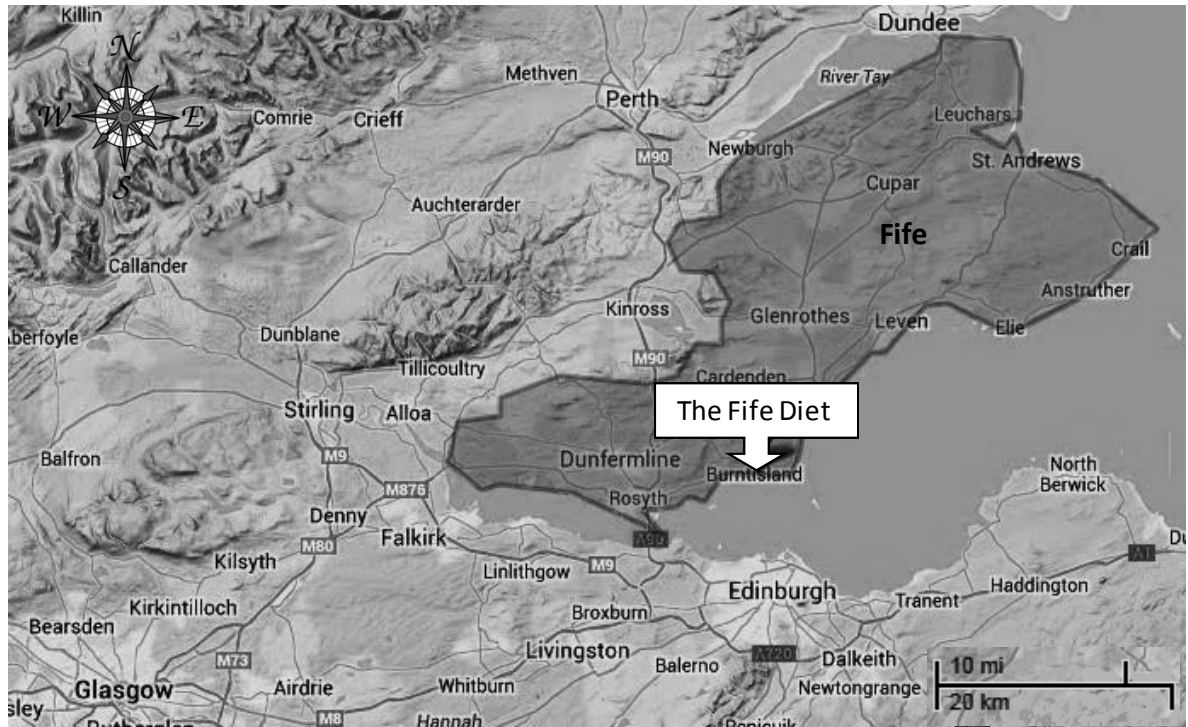


Figure 15. Map showing location of the Fife Diet within the county of Fife, Scotland

In terms of the geographical milieu of the organisation, the headquarters are based in a small coastal town of around 6000 inhabitants called Burntisland (see Figure 15 above). Burntisland is located only 21 miles from Edinburgh and 53 miles from Glasgow, but the largest towns within the surrounding county of Fife are Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline. Fife is the largest council in Scotland, and its 367,370 inhabitants (National Records of Scotland 2012) benefit from good accessibility to local services in comparison to most areas of Scotland, which are classified as 'remote'. Moreover, in 2010, Fife Council pledged to become the "leading green council" in Scotland by developing renewable energy and cutting carbon emissions, and has shown support for local food growing projects as part of this.

Fife also has a large proportion of the best quality agricultural land in the country, which is concentrated on the East coast (Macaulay Land Use Research Institute 2013). As a result, it is estimated that agricultural producers within Fife could feed the county's entire population based on diets roughly comparable to current consumption patterns (but not including 'exotic pleasures' such as tea, coffee, wine, chocolate, spices and tropical fruit) (Ritchie and Martinez 2010). Moreover, consumers across the country express strong preferences for Scottish foods, especially livestock products (Davidson, Martin et al. 2009). On the other hand, in contrast to consumers in the South East of England who purchase more organic products than the UK average, Scottish consumers purchase less than the average; they also purchase less 'environmentally-friendly' products than the UK average (The Scottish Government 2010).

6.2.2 The linked organisations

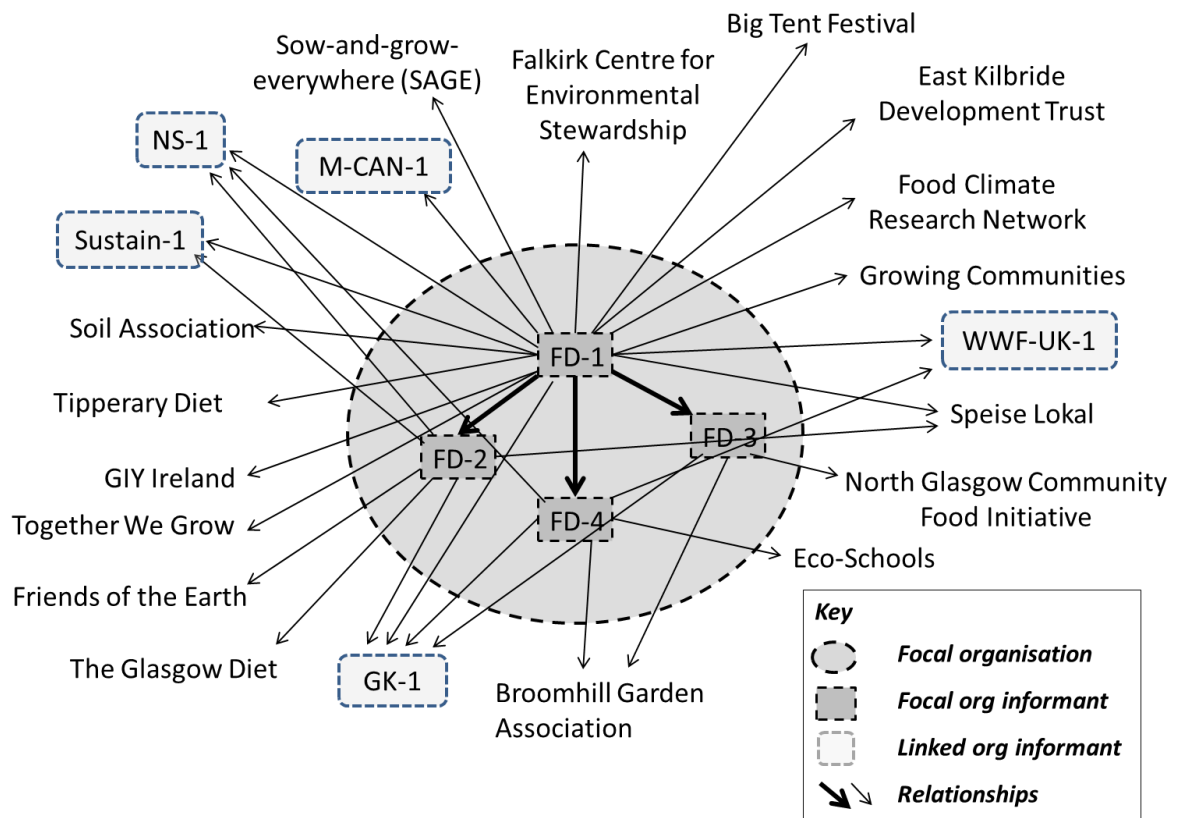


Figure 16. Network diagram showing the nine individuals interviewed in connection with this case (they are all given code names). The diagram also shows connections between the FD and numerous other CSOs, which were discovered through interviewing individuals from the FD.

6.2.2.1 *Moffat-CAN*

Moffat-CAN (M-CAN) is a limited company with charitable status and was founded in February 2009. It is based in the town of Moffat, in the county of Dumfries and Galloway, and its work is focused in the town and hinterland. It derives a large portion of its income from CCF grants (again, for driving carbon emissions reduction, see CHAPTER 2, section 2.1.2), and at the time of publication of the 2012 CCF evaluation report it employed 25 staff (though not all are full time). Most of the rest of its income is generated through payments for recycling and composting services and sales of food. In 2012, M-CAN had 189 email-able members (out of a local population of around 2,500), many of whom are involved in the various projects that M-CAN runs, which include: an allotments site, a community garden, an aquaponics⁴⁶ centre (the first in Scotland), a household waste recycling service and a furniture reuse service.

6.2.2.2 *Greener Kirkcaldy*

Greener Kirkcaldy (GK) is a limited company with charitable status that was founded in August 2010. It is based in the city of Kirkcaldy, the largest conurbation in the county of Fife, and its work is focussed within the local area. It employs four FTE members of staff and obtains the majority of its funds from the CCF for the purpose of helping local residents to reduce their carbon footprints. This is achieved through a variety of means – GK runs an advice centre, does home visits, organises events and runs training programs. Promoting local food and encouraging people to grow their own is one area of their work, but the main focus is on household energy use, waste reduction and green transport.

6.2.2.3 *Nourish Scotland*

Nourish Scotland (NS) is a Community Interest Company (CIC) and was founded in October 2009 at the organisation's inaugural event that was held in Dunbar, East Lothian. Until very recently, NS existed as an unincorporated association and was run without any core funding. Then, after an injection of funds from the Scottish Government and Esmée

⁴⁶ 'Aquaponics' refers to a system of cultivation that combines aquaculture with hydroponics, in which the biological waste from farming fish supplies the nutrients for growing plants hydroponically, which in turn purifies the water.

Fairbairn Foundation in late 2012, the organisation was established as a CIC and employed four part-time members of staff. With its office in Edinburgh, NS works across the country to encourage local food and farming organisations to connect up, work together and advocate for change. This is principally achieved through national and regional meetings, research into alternative systems, and the production of an e-zine and a dedicated website for exchanging best practice.

6.2.2.4 Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming

Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming (Sustain) is a limited company with charitable status founded in 1999 as the result of a merger between two national (UK) umbrella bodies, the National Food Alliance and the Sustainable Agriculture Food and Environment (Safe) Alliance (Sustain 2011). As an alliance, Sustain represents around 100 national public interest organisations from the food and farming sector, whose work has an influence at international, national, regional and local levels; membership is obtained by invitation and only open to “national organisations which do not distribute profits to private shareholders and which therefore operate in the public interest” (Sustain 2013). Though its offices are in central London, where the core of the organisation is based, the majority of projects and campaigns initiated by Sustain are delivered elsewhere by its member organisations. The membership spans a wide political and professional spectrum, including (*inter alia*) industry bodies, patient support groups, faith groups, campaigning groups, professional associations, charitable trusts, trade unions, and so on. Sustain is governed by a council of voluntary directors who are elected by the members, and over the year ending March 2011 it had an average of 26 FTE employees who co-ordinate the many projects that it sets up.

Sustain works in three ways, (1) by aggregating and disseminating information through its networks (including members and subscribers), (2) by pulling together sub-alliances of members to work on specific, time-bound projects, and (3) by rallying the whole membership to take action or speak with one voice on a pressing issue. Issues covered by its current portfolio of projects include public sector food reform, community food growing, ethical business, sustainable consumption and diets, and conservation. These

projects are funded from grants, membership subscriptions, and sales of publications (no funds are accepted from private companies). As mentioned in CHAPTER 3, Sustain was identified as a “hub” organisation within the food and farming subsector of UK civil society by the Food Ethics Council (2011), due to its numerous connections with other organisations in the sector.

6.2.2.5 WWF-UK

WWF-UK is a limited company and registered as a charity in England, Scotland and Wales. It was founded in 1961 as the first national office to be opened after the charity’s international secretariat (WWF-International) was established in the same year. Although WWF-UK has its headquarters in Surrey, it also has as a regional office in Dunkeld, Perthshire, and its work is focussed on national as well as international issues and institutions. Its food-related work in the UK is about “working with and influencing key players in the UK food industry – including retailers, producers, food processors, governments and charities – to transform the way UK food is supplied” (WWF-UK No date). WWF-UK employs more than 300 FTE staff members and in 2002 had over 530,000 individual supporters (including members, adopters, campaigners and other providers of financial and non-financial types of support).

6.3 Case III: The Soil Association

The Soil Association (SA) is a limited company with charitable status, headquartered in Bristol. It has a separate office in Scotland (just outside Edinburgh). Founded in 1946 by an eclectic group of around 100 organic food enthusiasts, the SA now claims to have over 24,000 members and supporters. Initially set up to establish a scientifically evidenced case for the enhanced health-giving properties of organically produced foods and improved soil fertility of organic farmland, it now has a significantly expanded remit and engages in a broad range of activities which will be detailed below. The SA comprises a number of separate legal entities, including the Soil Association Limited (the charity) and its three wholly-owned subsidiaries, the Soil Association Certification Limited (SA-CERT), the Soil Association Sales and Services Limited, and the Soil Association Land Trust Limited

(the land trust). SA-CERT itself has a further wholly-owned subsidiary, Ascisco Limited. Known as Soil Association Scotland (SAS), the Scottish office is nonetheless not a separate legal entity; it is part of the charity. However, it is run semi-autonomously to the Bristol office, having its own senior management team, membership and distinct programmes. There are currently around 185 FTE members of staff employed across the SA, with more than half of those being employed directly within the charity and most of the rest employed within SA-CERT. When referring to ‘the SA’ or ‘the organisation’ in the following two sections, I’ll be talking about the whole thing, including all the legal entities within it, as well as the staff, membership, assets and other holdings in England and Scotland. I will use the following shortenings to refer to the internal components of the organisation mentioned above: ‘the charity’, ‘SAS’, ‘SA-CERT’ and ‘the land trust’.

6.3.1 The geography and cultural milieu of the Soil Association

Since its beginnings in the post-war period, the SA has been at the forefront of the historical development of the organic movement in the UK and has strongly influenced developments at European and Global levels. Its own operations, which are controlled from the SA head office in Bristol, have a global reach but are concentrated within the UK. Thus, though the location of the head office in Bristol – which will be the European ‘Green Capital’ in 2015 – is worth mention, the geography of the SA is largely national, making developments at the UK level, as described in chapter two, more relevant than local context.

In this light, the credit crunch, the ensuing recession in the UK and the recent policy response from the Coalition Government are important contemporary influences. Sales of organic food and drink dropped by 10% in the year 2010 alone, which was quite a serious jolt for the organisation and the movement in the UK. Strangely, this trend is quite specific to the UK, as organic sales and market shares in other European countries and internationally have not suffered as sharp a drop, indeed many have continued to grow (Soil Association 2012a). Nonetheless, it has meant that the organisation’s main revenue stream – payments from farmers and food businesses for organic certification under the

SA's standards – has been restricted. It has also meant that sources of funding from statutory bodies and philanthropic organisations are under severe pressure. In addition, the changes in governance structures that have accompanied the Localism Act – which devolve various powers Local Authority level – pose a new challenge for the SA, which is unaccustomed to working at a local level.

According to the SA, organic food is “food which is produced using environmentally and animal friendly farming methods on organic farms” (Soil Association 2014) and organic farming “recognises the direct connection between our health and how the food we eat is produced. Artificial fertilisers are banned and farmers develop fertile soil by rotating crops and using compost, manure and clover” (Soil Association 2014). See also CHAPTER 2, section 2.2, where the development of the organic movement and market is discussed.

6.3.2 The linked organisations

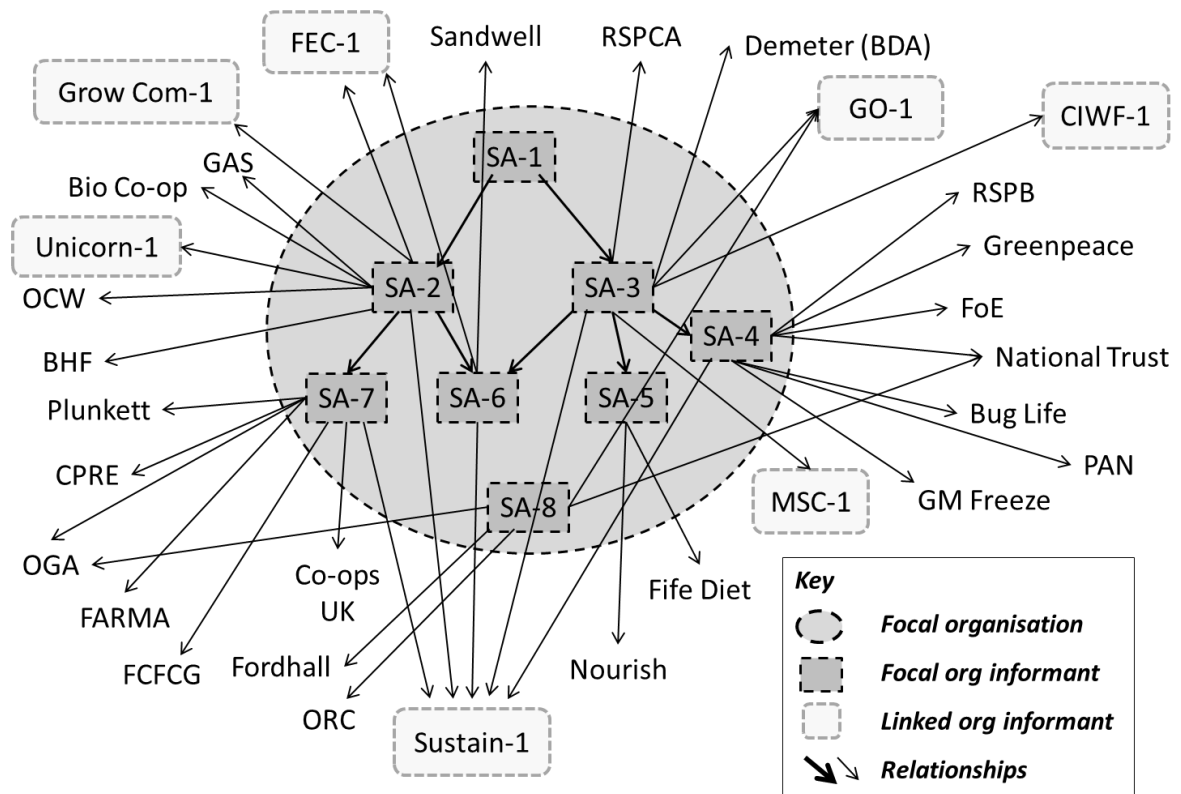


Figure 17. Network diagram showing the fifteen individuals interviewed in connection with this case (they are all given code names). The diagram also shows connections between the SA and numerous other CSOs, which were discovered through interviewing individuals from the SA.

6.3.2.1 Unicorn Grocery

Unicorn Grocery (Unicorn) is a wholefood retailer with a focus on organic, fair-trade and local sourcing. It is situated in Chorlton, South Manchester, and has been run as a workers' co-op (legally speaking it is an Industrial and Provident Society) since it was founded in 1996 by six individuals. Unicorn now has around 50 worker members and additional temporary staff, a turnover of around £5 million from sales of around 3,000 different grocery products, and a 10,000ft² site which was purchased following the sale of £350,000 worth of loan stock bonds to customers (Unicorn Grocery 2013a). The worker-members are also the directors of the company; all have an equal right to influence decisions about the business, which are made by consensus (Unicorn Grocery 2010). In addition to its retail business, Unicorn engages in other related activities, including the publication of a recommended products list and regular newsletter for customers; the production of films and written guides designed to help other groups set up their own co-operative retail businesses in different locations (under the 'Grow a Grocery' project); campaigning locally against the opening and expansion of supermarkets in Chorlton and Stretford; and working with a network of peri-urban suppliers to help them stock the store, including the 'Moss Brook Growers' CSA scheme, which was set up and funded by Unicorn, and is also run as a workers co-op.

6.3.2.2 Growing Communities

Growing Communities (Grow Com) is a not-for-profit social enterprise that runs a number of different community-led food projects in East London. It was founded as a CSA scheme in 1993, delivering fruit and vegetables from a farm in Buckinghamshire to 30 families in London. It now runs an organic box scheme that supplies around 700 households (or an estimated 3,500 people, all of whom automatically become members of the organisation) and promises to deliver fruit and vegetables that are sourced as locally as possible. Grow Com is governed by a voluntary management committee, which is elected by the members. In addition to the box scheme, Grow Com also runs a farmers' market, as well as three urban market gardens, a four-acre peri-urban farm, and a patchwork of nine urban food-growing micro-sites (c. 150m² each, collectively known as the 'Patchwork

Farm'), all of which supply the box scheme and farmers' market with salads and other crops. Since it started, Grow Com has trained volunteers to do the growing by offering regular supervised work sessions and running educational growing workshops for adults and children. Today, most of the various growing sites are managed by ex-volunteers who now earn an income from their work. Grow Com has also developed a manifesto and a model of community-led trade for transforming the food system (based on its own experiences), both of which are promoted through Grow Com's 'Start-up Programme'. Groups that sign up to the programme receive detailed practical assistance through an online toolkit, mentoring and training, peer-support and an interest-free loan from Grow Com itself.

6.3.2.3 Garden Organic

Garden Organic (GO) – registered and formerly known as the Henry Doubleday Research Association – was founded in 1954 as a club for experimenting gardeners, but grew rapidly from the 1970's onwards into the organic gardeners' membership charity that it is today (Garden Organic 2013a). It now employs around 80 members of staff, has over 30,000 members, receives "tens of thousands" of visitors to its display gardens annually, and claims to reach more than 3,000,000 beneficiaries through its advice and information provided online (Wilkinson, Milligan et al. 2012). GO owns a trading subsidiary, Organic Enterprises Limited, which raises funds from the sale of its publications, as well as retail and catering sales at its display gardens, the profits from which it gift-aids back to the charity. It also raises funds from membership fees, donations, legacies, grants and admissions to its display gardens.

GO uses this income to carry out a range of charitable activities including (1) the provision of advice for organic gardeners in the form of books, reference manuals, step-by-step guides, a quarterly membership magazine and individual factsheets, as well as the Organic Gardening Guidelines (their own official principles and practices of organic agriculture, adapted from the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement's guidelines), (2) research into organic techniques and production systems for "commercial organic horticulture and sustainable agriculture" (Garden Organic 2013c), (3) international

development projects to facilitate the practice of “organic and ecological agriculture” in Africa, Asia and Latin America (Garden Organic 2013b), (4) school-based education programmes delivered through the Food for Life Partnership (FFLP), (5) support and training around gardening and composting for volunteer outreach workers (known as the ‘Master Gardeners’ project), and (6) the operation of two demonstration gardens, a visitor centre and seed library.

6.3.2.4 Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming

See section 6.2.2.4 above.

6.3.2.5 The Food Ethics Council

The Food Ethics Council (FEC) is a registered charity that provides research, analysis and advocacy on controversial food-related issues to an audience of private, public and civil society organisations. It was established in 1998 and has grown significantly in scope and influence since then, if not in terms of the number of employees. The FEC currently employs around three FTEs and makes use of unpaid interns to support its work. It is governed by a voluntary council with 14 appointed members who are recognised as leaders in their fields (i.e. within the food and farming sector). The FEC is funded by a mix of grants from charitable foundations, donations from individuals, and income from consultancy work and subscriptions to its magazine, Food Ethics (Browning, Tansey et al. 2012). Its research, analysis and advocacy work, which is UK-focused but the scope is global, is carried out by undertaking projects, publishing reports, briefings and the magazine, organising deliberative workshops and events (including its regular Business Forum), and developing tools for decision-making. The FEC frequently partners with other organisations, including public sector bodies, companies, campaign groups and research institutes, to deliver its work.

6.3.2.6 Compassion in World Farming

Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) is a registered charity that campaigns for the compassionate treatment of farm animals worldwide. It was founded in 1967, “by a British farmer who became horrified by the development of modern, intensive factory

farming” (Compassion in World Farming 2013a). CIWF now has offices in The Netherlands, France and Italy, in addition to its headquarters in Godalming, UK, and works with representatives in the United States, South Africa and China. In the tax year 2011-12, CIWF reported having 70 employees, 352 volunteer fundraisers, and more than 51,000 supporters who receive their e-news and updates (Compassion in World Farming 2012). To fund its charitable activities, CIWF relies on a mixture of legacies, donations from individuals, grants from charitable trusts and foundations, and money raised through events and raffles (ibid.). These activities include (1) *lobbying* the European Government to strengthen legislation and enforcement on farm animal welfare; intergovernmental agencies to adopt higher welfare policies; and food companies to sell higher welfare products, (2) enabling consumers to “make higher welfare food choices” (Compassion in World Farming 2013b) by providing guidance and advice, and (3) supporting/promoting producers who adopt higher welfare farming practices by publicly celebrating their achievements.

6.3.2.7 The Marine Stewardship Council

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) is an international, independent, non-profit organisation registered as a charity in the UK, US and Australia. It was founded in 1997 by WWF and Unilever, who both had interests in securing sustainable seafood supplies. They initiated an international stakeholder consultation that lasted two years and which produced the MSC’s standard for sustainable fisheries. This standard is now used to engage more than 300 fisheries worldwide in a programme of certification, and to provide more than 20,000 seafood products that come from certified sustainable fisheries (bearing the MSC label) (Marine Stewardship Council 2013a). The MSC is governed by a board of appointed voluntary directors who are advised by a wider stakeholder council and a technical advisory board. It has its headquarters in London, but also has offices in the Netherlands, the United States, Australia, Sweden, France, Germany, Iceland, Japan, Poland, Singapore, Scotland, South Africa, and Spain. It employs around 100 staff across the different locations. Its work is funded by licensing fees (for the use of the MSC label), donations from individuals and grants from charitable foundations. The MSC doesn’t

certify fisheries itself, but licenses other organisations to do so. Besides the development and maintenance of its standard, the MSC also engages in the following activities: working with fisheries to promote sustainable fishing; helping food businesses to develop sustainable seafood policies; promoting the MSC label to consumers; and working with schools and school caterers to help them teach children about and serve more sustainable seafood (the 'Fish for Kids' project).

--

Having now provided an overview of the focal organisation in each case, a brief description of its geography and cultural milieu, and an introduction to all the linked organisations, I will move on the three case study chapters (CHAPTER 7, CHAPTER 8 and CHAPTER 9), in which I will present the results of my analysis.

PART II: Outputs

CHAPTER 7. Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch

In the following sections I will use material from interviews that I conducted with individuals from each of the organisations in this case, including four individuals from T&PH and one from each of the linked organisations (see Appendix B).

As explained in CHAPTER 5 (section 5.2.3), the rest of this chapter is organised into three sections: 7.1 Activities, 7.2 Relationships, and 7.3 Intentions. In the first section I will consider the extent to which the various organisations' activities are characteristic of the four roles in the RIT framework. In the second section I will present my observations about the substantial and formal relationships between the organisations in the study. And in the third section I will explore the intentions behind the organisations' activities. Once I have done this I will move on to the next case, in the following chapter.

7.1 Activities

According to the study methodology, T&PH was selected as the focal organisation in this case because it seemed, from initial research, to enact the role of grassroots innovation. In this section I will test this assumption, by exploring the extent to which the organisation's activities are characteristic of this and whether other roles in the RIT framework are in evidence. In addition, I will consider the extent to which the linked organisations' activities are characteristic of the different roles in transition. Thus, this section is separated into two sub-sections. The first section (7.1.1), which examines T&PH, will look in depth at the organisation, both concurrently and over time. In the second section (7.1.2), a less detailed, snapshot examination of the other organisations will be provided. The core characteristics of each role were defined in CHAPTER 4, but see Table 8 (CHAPTER 5) for easy reference.

7.1.1 Tablehurst & Plaw Hatch

7.1.1.1 Grassroots innovation

Novelty

In the case of T&PH, novelty⁴⁷ is displayed in a number of different ways. The most obvious example is related to the biodynamic agricultural techniques that are practised at the farms. Biodynamic farming is both a very uncommon approach in the UK, being practised by a tiny fraction of farmers and growers, and a very unconventional one, entailing severe limits to the types and amounts of external inputs that are brought into the farming system (more so than dictated by organic standards), an approach to animal husbandry that is radically animal-centric, and – most unconventionally – the use of a range of ‘preparations’ and astrological calendars (Norman 2012).

For example, a common biodynamic preparation known as ‘horn manure’ is made by fermenting cow manure inside a cow horn that has been buried in the soil over winter. Very small amounts of the horn manure are then diluted in water before being sprayed onto crops. Furthermore, in order to respect the ‘true nature’ of the animals that are part of biodynamic farming systems, cows horns are never removed before their death, despite the fact that this necessitates lower stocking densities. In addition to these aspects, biodynamic farmers practice a range of other techniques that are common to organic farming but uncommon to conventional agriculture (including crop rotations, composting, manuring, and the integration of livestock with crops).

In the words of T&PH-4:

“I think what makes Plawhatch different are the values of the farmers here and our approach to animal welfare standards [...] so it is a very animal centric approach to husbandry. It is not an anthropocentric approach, but an animal-centric approach, so the focus is on mostly husbandry: trying to seek and understand what the

⁴⁷ This concept applies in comparison to those arrangements and tools that are common within incumbent food regimes (see Table 8, CHAPTER 5).

requirements of an animal are in terms of their natural behaviour, and sailing as close as one can economically to the natural needs and behaviour of the animal.”

Furthermore, the worldview that underpins biodynamic agriculture, known as anthroposophy, has stark ontological, epistemological and methodological differences in comparison with the worldviews that underpin traditional, conventional and organic forms of farming (Lorand 1996). The significance of anthroposophy for T&PH staff was brought to my attention when, during an interview, T&PH-4 reflected on how the particular balance of different kinds of ‘forces’⁴⁸ at work on both farms impacts their relationships with their wider communities, their day-to-day management decisions, and their visions for the future of the farms. A striking example of where and how anthroposophy is regularly practised at T&PH is within the Study Group. Members of staff at both farms have a tradition of meeting together in their own free time to study anthroposophical principles and reflect on how they might be applied to real problems that they encounter at work.

In addition to this, T&PH also uses an unconventional business model. By selling their produce through the two farm shops and processing their goods onsite (‘direct marketing’), this allows the farm to retain a higher proportion of the value created in the sale of their finished products to consumers than if they sold their goods directly to a wholesaler, processor or retailer, as is more commonly practiced by agricultural businesses in the UK (Defra 2012c: 19). For instance, Tablehurst farm has its own abattoir for poultry, its own mill for making flour, its own butcher for processing all the meat produced, its own shop for selling the produce, and its own café where bread, pastries, pies and seasonal salads are sold. Furthermore, by comparison to the rest of the farming sector in England, T&PH offers an unusually diverse range of products and services. Firstly, Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch both are mixed farms, comprising livestock, arable and horticulture; and secondly, the farm businesses are ‘diversified’ into a range of non-agricultural services, including social care, education and research. To set this in context,

⁴⁸ In anthroposophy there are understood to be various different kinds of natural and ethereal forces present throughout nature.

it was estimated that, in the accounting year 2011/12, less than 10% of farms in England were 'mixed' farms⁴⁹, and of those, only 34% were 'diversified'⁵⁰ (Defra 2011a, Defra 2013).

Moreover, T&PH is owned and governed co-operatively – making T&PH arguably a form of CSA – which is a very uncommon arrangement in the UK (see CHAPTER 6, sections 6.1 and 6.1.1). Unlike shareholders of commercial enterprises, the shareholders in T&PH do not receive any dividends or other financial rewards for their investment. In fact, they are more like donors who also have the right to attend and vote at AGMs, and stand as trustees of the co-op. This unconventional approach to management is also apparent in the relationships that the organisation has with other key stakeholders. For instance, its landlord, St Anthony's Trust, has made significant donations in the form of infrastructure and machinery for the farms, which is unusual for a landlord-tenant relationship⁵¹. Moreover, the attitude of openness and inclusivity that T&PH expresses through its co-operative ownership and governance structure is also expressed in other ways. Examples include inviting people to visit and explore the farm in guided walks, responding to and consulting local residents with regards to developments on the two farms, and making space within the culture and community of the farm for the three adults with learning difficulties that work there. In the words of T&PH-2:

"The community farming notion is very much a torch-bearer for that type of social engagement – inclusiveness of what are generally excluded individuals [...] and not incarcerating them in the same ways and acknowledging that those individuals form a key part of any social group. They are as valid and have the same rights as you or I do in society, and they give us all an opportunity to reflect and understand what our place is in society." (T&PH-2)

⁴⁹ This means that no single crop or livestock type accounts for more than 2/3 of the total farm output.

⁵⁰ This means that they generate income from non-agricultural activities other than letting buildings.

⁵¹ St Anthony's Trust is a charitable foundation with the purposes of supporting activities – such as the development of the two farms – which express the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner. See later in this section.

Responsiveness

Moving on from ‘novelty’ to ‘responsiveness’, activities that embody this characteristic of grassroots innovation – i.e. being framed in response to aspects of the local situation and the interests or values of those involved – are also abundantly present at T&PH. According to the literature on grassroots innovations, this characteristic makes the organisation capable of generating direct sustainability benefits in its locality (see CHAPTER 4, section 4.1.1), which is also apparent from the instances and examples that I will now relay. First and foremost, T&PH supplies a range of fresh, in-season staple foods, as well as a range of grocery items, to local people and organisations. As well as supplying fresh, healthy and ethically-sourced food through their retail outlets, T&PH also supplies the Steiner school in Forest Row with ingredients for school meals. Moreover, as explained by T&PH-2 (below), the decision to prioritise local markets makes T&PH potentially more inclusive than many traditional box schemes or CSAs:

“Having a shop where you don’t have a contract and you don’t rely on this group of people with whom you have this direct contract, you have more an indirect contract, because you just open your doors and people come in. Now there will be a group of people who would happily sign up to buy a regular meat box or vegetable box, but [...] it’s quite exclusive. Whereas, if you open your doors and anybody can come in, then there is more inclusiveness around it.” (T&PH-2)

Moreover, T&PH is also supportive of an array of other needs, interests and values held by individuals and other organisations within the locality. Firstly, in 2012 T&PH responded to a need for land articulated by a number of residents of Forest Row who were keen to grow food but who had no usable space of their own. After a consultation which involved the farm staff, co-op committee, St Anthony’s Trust and the local residents, T&PH decided to provide an area of allotments on land at Tablehurst Farm; though local residents’ use of the land is not without conditions. Specifically, plot-holders must ensure that the land continues to be cultivated biodynamically, which is a point of utmost importance for the co-op committee and T&PH staff. This means that plot-holders must refrain from the use

chemical inputs or other practices that are banned under biodynamic guidelines. However, the application of biodynamic preparations and execution of other more esoteric practices is undertaken by the farm staff in co-operation with the plot-holders.

Secondly, T&PH provides access to land and training for its c. 20 staff and students at the BDAC, as well as the apprentices that it takes on regularly. The BDAC alone has trained over 150 students, the vast majority of which would have spent some time working at and learning from T&PH. According to T&PH-1 this provides a rare opportunity for young people who are not from a farming background to gain skills and experience in the sector: “the one thing that distinguishes all of them [i.e. staff at T&PH] is that none of them can afford to farm in their own right when they come; they don’t have the experience and they don’t have the money” (T&PH-1). However, the extent to which the provision of land and training is of actual benefit to the staff and students that work at T&PH is a matter for contention. Talking about T&PH, BDAC-1 commented that there was some resentment amongst certain T&PH staff about the low wages they are paid for their labour. BDAC-1 was referring specifically to staff that had worked on the farm for a long time, had made personal sacrifices for the good of the farm, but had then left without a pension or any of their own savings.

Another way that T&PH is responsive to aspects of its local situation is by supporting the ecological integrity of the local environment. As demonstrated within a growing body of research, organic and biodynamic techniques encourage enhanced biodiversity of local wildlife, as well as improved genetic diversity of crops and livestock (Carpenter-Boggs, Kennedy et al. 2000, Scialabba, Grandi et al. 2003, Hole, Perkins et al. 2005). In fact, biodynamic farming, as it is conceived, is about attending to the particularities of the farm and creating a farm system that is as ‘closed-loop’, or self-sustaining, as possible. Hence it is radically responsive to the specific environmental and social conditions of the locality. As explained by T&PH-3, who was talking about the spirit of biodynamic farming, “every farm is different, so there is always a different balance needed”.

Finally, in addition to the examples provided above, T&PH has also shown responsiveness to the local situation and the interests or values of those involved by, 1) supporting the start-up of a new local food enterprise by providing expertise, machinery and business management training for its founders (Brambletye Fruit Farm⁵², which is located on land adjacent to Tablehurst Farm, was mentioned in CHAPTER 6, section 6.1.1), 2) putting on a range of community events that are well attended by residents of Forest Row, including BBQs, farm walks, barn dances and seasonal festivities, and 3) providing a place where adults with learning difficulties can receive residential care (this kind of arrangement is known as ‘care farming’ within the sector).

Protection

Finally, moving on to ‘protection’, I have found evidence that T&PH enjoys a degree of protection from full exposure to the market pressures that apply to most agricultural enterprises in the UK at the current time. These pressures, which lead most producers to intensify and specialise their operations, were summed up succinctly by T&PH-4: “Economically it is not a proposition, economically this is not a place to grow potatoes, if you want to grow potatoes you go off to Jersey or Wales, parts of Wales, you go wherever.”

But to its customers, volunteers and other stakeholders their interest in and support for T&PH is about more than economics. In fact, there are a host of reasons why these different people and organisations are willing to volunteer their time and other resources in service to T&PH. Speaking as one of the voluntary trustees and directors that serve both farms, T&PH-1 put it like this:

“And then you get people like [T&PH-2] and me who might not make any living out of it, but who get a great deal from it – other benefits beyond the food. And certainly one of the characteristics of this farm has been the strength of that group of people around it. What have we got? An architect, an osteopath, a couple of parents of young children who aren't working outside of the home, a couple of

⁵² Brambletye Fruit Farm was previously known as Tablehurst Orchard.

shop keepers from the village now, financial consultants-- You know, so essentially they have all just arrived. I don't think we've ever gone and found someone. They've all arrived at the door." (T&PH-1)

This 'protective community' of volunteers, loyal customers and other stakeholders has been around for a long time, at least going back to the late 1970s when family-farmer, Andrew Carnegie, started farming at Plaw Hatch and set about building what he called an 'agricultural community' around the farm. Although not formalised, at the time that Carnegie started farming in 1979 this community was made up of 93 members including farm staff as well as other local people. Then, in 1994, the support offered by the group of people who raised the money to buy Tablehurst and set up the IPS was all that stood between the farm and market forces that would have most likely put an end to biodynamic community-supported agriculture on the site. After all, Emerson College, which had run the farm biodynamically for more than 25 years, was no longer able to finance it and so had to put it up for sale. Moreover, due to the high market value and levels of interest in the farm, there was intense commercial pressure to sell it to a 'conventional' (i.e. for-profit, non-biodynamic) farmer.

In recent times, T&PH has been offered further forms of protection from financial stress. In 2012, a supportive community was mobilised to purchase and put into trust a portion of the land farmed by Tablehurst farmers which was previously held on a standard short-term tenancy. The portion of land, known as the Brambletye Fields, was entrusted to the BDLT with the aim of ensuring that it remain under biodynamic agriculture in perpetuity (see also CHAPTER 6, section 6.1.2.3). Moreover, St Anthony's Trust has provided financial support to T&PH by funding both the construction of a new barn, and the development of an enlarged shop, abattoir and butchery facility (as discussed earlier on in this section). The explanation for the support is that St Anthony's, like T&PH, is an anthroposophical organisation which aims to further the teachings of Rudolf Steiner. So by supporting T&PH, wherein anthroposophical practices are manifested and taught, the trust is supporting the furtherance of its underlying values.

However, though the protection offered to T&PH by supportive communities of individuals and organisations has endured over time, this support may be changing. Whereas “in the early days” local people used to regularly come on farm to get involved in volunteer work days, this is deemed as unfeasible now (Ravenscroft and Hanney 2011). Whilst Ravenscroft and Hanney (2011) suggest that this apparent weakening of “community connections” is the result of people’s complacency and waning interest during the recent “period of financial and social stability on the farms” (ibid.), T&PH-2 suggested that it is the result of people becoming increasingly accustomed to paying for things. So, although they are comfortable to engage with the farms as shareholders of the business, consumers of the produce, customers of the café, and punters for events, they are far less comfortable to attend meetings or hoe the fields.

“So if you wanted to do for example volunteer workdays, twenty years ago that was something you could do. Now, trying to get twenty or thirty people out into a field to weed is just something you can’t do; they just won’t turn up.” (T&PH-2)

Nonetheless, the farms may be adapting to this change by seeking to influence the preferences of their customers⁵³ and thereby ensure more dedicated and continuing support. For instance, T&PH-4 talked about, “the slow process of working with our customers and weaning them off foreign foods”. By developing and encouraging a preference amongst T&PH’s customer base for purchasing local foods, T&PH-4 believes that the farms might improve their chances of retaining customers who could otherwise be lost to their main competitors, such as the Tesco Metro in the village. Moreover, Plaw Hatch farm is aware that it already enjoys the loyalty of customers who prefer to buy biodynamic and organic produce:

“Well we did a customer survey probably a year and a half ago and we asked them what was important to them and they did say that the values of our farming and

⁵³ Influencing consumer preferences could be interpreted as a characteristic of normative contestation if it was linked to an intention to destabilise incumbent food systems. However, in this case the intention is more about building local demand and support for their products and no intention to generate wider impacts are articulated.

the fact that we are biodynamic and organic, those were the things that were most important to them.” (T&PH-4)

Another important aspect of the enduring protection offered to T&PH by many of its volunteers, customers and other stakeholders is related to what one interviewee called “ideological cohesion” (see quotation below). As described in CHAPTER 6, section 6.1.1, T&PH is part of a network of anthroposophical organisations that are clustered in and around the village of Forest Row and whose cohesion as a community has a relatively long history. Moreover, within the organisation, it is possible that the biodynamic approach, embodied in the farm management practices and embraced in the private lives of the staff and volunteers, confers a kind of ‘cohesion’ to the group that would be missing without it.

“The thing that bio-dynamics has going for it is an ideological cohesion, as you find in anthroposophy. So you have got a group of people who believe in something, who believe that farming like this is important for the future and they believe in it so strongly they are going to stand by it through thick and thin. They will come to meetings on site and AGMs on Sundays, and it is all these sorts of things, because they really believe it; a significant, substantial number of people, a critical number of people who are determined that this will work. Whereas, if you try and establish this thing in a community just out of London I don’t know how much social cohesion there is, because people live very isolated lives.” (T&PH-2)

Furthermore, this “ideological cohesion” may also influence the customers of T&PH’s two farm shops, though there are a variety of reasons for their loyalty, as explained above and summarised in the quotation below:

“I’d say now that the majority of the people who shop here probably have some connection with anthroposophy, but of the people who come from London, Sevenoaks, they don’t. They come because they love the feel of the place. We have people who come from Brighton who have very little interest in anthroposophy but an interest in animal welfare and good tasting food.” (T&PH-1)

So, to briefly summarise before moving on to consider the other roles that T&PH might be playing in transition, in the above passages I have outlined a number of ways in which the organisation embodies the characteristics of novelty, responsiveness and protection, which are key to grassroots innovation. Firstly, novelty is embodied at T&PH in the practices of biodynamic agriculture, direct marketing, diversification, community-connected farming, and anthroposophy. Secondly, that T&PH displays responsiveness to the specific needs, interests and values of the locality is evident by supplying fresh, local, ethically produced food for local consumption, allotments for local residents, events for the community, support for local enterprise, land and training for new farmers, residential care and employment for adults with learning disabilities, and by embodying an approach to natural resource management that is responsive to the local environment and enhances ecological integrity. And thirdly, the characteristic of protection is evident in the relationships that T&PH has had over time with the volunteers, loyal customers and other stakeholders who have, on the one hand, offered relief from financial stress by fundraising to buy out the two farm businesses, purchase land, and invest in infrastructure development, and on the other hand, provided volunteer labour to the farms and loyal custom to the shops.

7.1.1.2 Niche development

Aggregation

I have found evidence of certain individuals who work at T&PH engaging in activities that clearly concern the aggregation of lessons to stimulate niche-level learning and the creation of institutional infrastructures, in addition to co-ordination and framing. Firstly, Tablehurst's managing director also is the chairman of the BDA's board of directors and a director of the BDAC. In these roles, he is responsible for ensuring that the objects of the BDA are enforced, which cover the three characteristics mentioned above, i.e. aggregation, infrastructure creation and co-ordination.

Secondly, T&PH-1 has been heavily involved with the Soil Association's project to support the development of CSA in the UK. He has worked with a team of other experts to

develop shared understandings of what CSA is about and how it can be replicated, scaled up and integrated into wider food networks. For instance, he was one of the main authors of a two-module teaching programme for degree students in agriculture-related subjects that covers the theory and practice of CSA, and he also contributed to writing an earlier report that aims to define CSA, provides a series of case studies, and envisages 'the future of CSA'. The first is designed to be used by further and higher education institutions wanting to deliver training on CSA to young farmers, whereas the second is designed to be used by farmers and communities that would like to set up a CSA scheme. In combination, these two reports, which are available online for free, draw together lessons from individual projects (aggregation) and provide a set of guidelines to help both farmers and communities that want to practice CSA (co-ordination).

Though both of these examples concern the activities of specific individuals in their capacities as members of *other* organisations, they nonetheless show that expertise exists within T&PH in relation to three out of four of the core characteristics of the development role. Whether this expertise will be further developed and harnessed within the organisation in the future remains to be seen.

Co-ordination

T&PH currently plays a role in framing and co-ordinating the activities of biodynamic farms elsewhere (and of the future). It achieves this through its position as a crucial link in the small network of organisations in Europe that provide education and training for new biodynamic farmers (discussed further in the next section). This is not a new thing – Tablehurst Farm was the training farm for the biodynamic agriculture and horticulture diplomas run by Emerson College (now taken over by the BDAC) for more than 25 years until it was bought out by the community share offer that set up the current organisation. Nonetheless, it has developed over the years. For instance, T&PH has recently underwritten the BDA's apprentice scheme – which currently has around 15-20 apprentices enrolled – and delivers a lot of the training for the scheme. In addition, by providing employment for an increasing number of staff – which has now reached around

20 FTEs – the farms act as a springboard for new entrants into the sector. People come and work as staff on the farms, gain experience, and then leave to run their own tenant farms elsewhere around the world. All of these new farmers who have worked for and completed training on the two farms will take their experience with them into their future careers, potentially spreading the T&PH way of doing things as they go. In the words of T&PH-2:

“Some people have gone on to run small farms elsewhere. Laura, a shepherd here, went to France, and she and her then partner rented a farm, so they’ll use it as a stepping stone either to stay with us and connect to the future here-- David our arable man has done that and became a director of the farm last year and has thrown his lot in with us. Others leave to go off and manage their own farms. That’s what Raff and Stephie will do on a rented farm somewhere.” (T&PH-2)

Moreover, T&PH are currently exploring ways of extending their training and educational capacity to provide opportunities for schoolchildren. Since 2011 they have been developing plans for a project currently called ‘Learning on the Land’. This project would enable groups of children to come and stay on the farms and learn about farming through direct experience. Proponents of the project from amongst the staff believe that it could provide a missing link, by making children aware of the opportunities that exist for them to have a career in agriculture, before they have made key decisions about their futures. At the time of interviewing (early 2012) it was unclear whether the project will go ahead, but work is now underway to develop it. Subsequent to submitting a bid to the Big Lottery Fund that failed to win funding for the project, a detailed feasibility study is being carried out with finance from a local philanthropist. T&PH-1 hinted at the rationale for the project when talking about a group of young people that came to visit Tablehurst Farm from their own communal growing projects in East London (Spitalfields City Farm) and inner city Manchester (a shared allotment run by young lesbian and bisexual women who are part of the group ‘Lik:t’):

“There were a couple of girls there and one of them, when we were taking a tea break, said to Ellie “Do you work here?” “Yes”. Clearly impressed by this large machine she was driving, “Do they pay you?” “Yes”. “Do you have your own bedroom?” “Yes”. And this was quite interesting. This girl then says, “Well nobody ever told me I could do this”. So I think that there is a whole element missing that says, ‘if you farm like this you can be born and brought up right in the city and you can be male or female and you can go and get training and you can come here with no money’.” (T&PH-1)

7.1.1.3 Normative contestation

Campaigning

The ‘Learning on the Land’ project, if it goes ahead, could take T&PH into new territory in terms of the roles that it plays in transition. Since the project’s aim is to increase public awareness and appreciation of alternative (biodynamic, community-connected) farming systems, it could herald a shift in direction for the farms towards greater engagement with actors outside of the biodynamic niche – i.e. potentially embodying the characteristic of campaigning. However, as stated above, the project has not yet been realised, so it cannot be considered as constitutive of the roles that T&PH is currently playing in transition.

Aside from this tentative development, I didn’t find any further evidence of activities that could be characterised as normative contestation. T&PH is certainly not involved in any obvious attempts to undermine incumbent systems, it doesn’t lobby industry and policymakers, and it doesn’t run public campaigns to shift public opinion in favour of niche technologies or to intensify dissatisfaction with the incumbent regime. In fact, some of the staff that I interviewed gave the impression that T&PH self-consciously avoids playing a disruptive role, so far as that entails ‘putting it in your face’ or ‘making it too evangelical’ (see quotations below).

“I feel the farm doesn’t say too much what it does, no. You know, it’s not until you are here that it’s like, “oh really, oh that’s how it works” [...] So I think you have to

be open and want to understand a bit more, because the farm is not like putting in your face anything [...] The view is very deep-rooted in the sense of – not hidden – but what I mean is it's like it's the base of everything, but it's not what we're saying. We're not talking about it, not at all. It's more like, if you're interested you'll get it, if you ask." (T&PH-3)

"We're not really on the campaign trail, we provide raw milk to our community because we feel that's the right thing to do, but we're a little bit concerned about making it too evangelical." (T&PH-4)

7.1.1.4 Summary

The findings discussed in this section – concerning the roles played by T&PH, both concurrently and over time, in transitions to sustainable food systems – are summarised in Figure 19 (at the end of the chapter). The diagram, which is adapted from Geels (2002), does two things. Firstly, it maps the current activities of T&PH onto the MLP to illustrate the roles that the organisation currently plays in transitions, and secondly, it indicates the shifting position of the organisation over time with respect to these roles. (The current activities of T&PH are represented by the text that is contained within the shaded area. The shaded arrows represent the shifting position of the organisation over time; dark shaded arrows indicate past shifts and light shaded arrows indicate possible future shifts.)

However, in comparison to Geels' original and subsequent (2002, 2011) uses of the MLP diagram, my adaptation differs in an important way. For Geels, the horizontal axis represented *time* in a historical sense, whilst the vertical axis represented the degree of structuration of socio-technical elements (e.g. being highly structured, the landscape level encompassed configurations of elements that are beyond the agency of individual actors). In terms of my treatment of the vertical axis, the positioning of activities indicates the degree of structuration of the broader processes that they are a part of. However, in my adaptation the horizontal axis represents *transformation*, and is intended to depict the relative positioning of activities with respect to processes of socio-technical change in an ahistorical way. Thus, the diagram features activities undertaken by a specific CSO at

different times, but those activities are not positioned according to their historical occurrence. Instead, the different kinds of activities are positioned according to their proximity to processes of socio-technical change (grassroots innovation, niche development, and so on), and their *approximate* temporal sequencing is instead indicated by the numbers and curved arrows. As a result, Figure 19 does not map the extent of an historical food transition.

Overall, adapting the MLP diagram in this way makes sense given that I am interested in the activities of CSOs *in so far as they relate to 'transitions in the making'* (Elzen, Geels et al. 2011), rather than historical transitions (refer back to CHAPTER 5, end of section 5.1.1, where I have discussed my treatment of temporality within the study).

Nonetheless, this diagram and the preceding analysis reveal a couple of things. Firstly, although most of T&PH's activities embody the characteristics of grassroots innovation, the organisation itself is not strategically specialised in the performance of this role alone. T&PH also engages in activities that embody one of the core characteristics of niche development, i.e. framing and coordinating the development of other organisations that sit within related socio-technical niches. Secondly, these framing and co-ordinating activities, which were only just present in the early days of the organisation, have been strengthened in recent years. Moreover, an area of planned future activity, i.e. the plan to increase public awareness and appreciation of biodynamic systems through the 'Learning on the Land' project, embodies characteristics of normative contestation. Hence, rather than being set in place from the outset, the relationship of T&PH to these roles in transition has subtly changed emphasis over time and looks as though it might carry on changing in the future.

7.1.2 The linked organisations

My analysis of the extent to which the linked organisations' activities are characteristic of the different roles in transition is summarised in two different formats (see Table 10 and Figure 20 at the end of the chapter). Table 10 lists the different activities carried out by the organisations under the headings of the four roles in transition. However, in my

analysis I identified a number of instances where the activities seemed to conflate the roles, potentially characterising more than one of them simultaneously. To indicate these instances, I have written the items in italicised text under the headings that I have judged them to characterise most strongly and drawn arrows to the other headings that they characterise to a lesser extent. The diagram (Figure 20), on the other hand, is similar to Figure 19 in that it maps the current activities of T&PH and the other organisations onto the MLP to illustrate the roles that they currently play in transition (represented by the shaded areas). The shapes, sizes and positioning of the shaded areas give an indication of the extent to which the current activities of the different organisations embody the core characteristics of the different roles.

As can be seen in the two figures, all of the CSOs in the network of T&PH embody core characteristics of multiple roles. None of them performs only one role discretely. Hence, counter to expectations established in CHAPTER 4, none of them displays a particularly strong degree of strategic specialisation. Another related finding from this analysis is that all of the roles are being enacted by at least one of the organisations within the network of linked groups. This shows that T&PH has connections with organisations that play different roles to the roles that it plays itself and that across the network there is a ‘doubling up’ by organisations enacting the same roles as each other, though often in different ways. And although the organisations in the network of T&PH have all of the four roles covered, the coverage is not even. The density of the shading under the multiple overlapping shaded areas in Figure 20 gives an indication of the degree of duplication of effort for the different roles. Hence, the diagram indicates that, in the network of T&PH, the dominant role is niche development, and then secondly grassroots innovation. This pattern is also clear from Table 10.

7.2 Relationships

In this section I will first describe the *substantial relationships* (Sayer 1992) that each of the linked organisations have with T&PH. I will then briefly comment on the extent to

which each of them is *formally related* (Sayer 1992) to T&PH through their identifications with a UK food and farming policy/issue field and different social movements.

7.2.1 Substantial relations

7.2.1.1 The Biodynamic Agricultural College

The BDAC has inherited some historical connections to T&PH through Emerson College, which was founded in Forest Row in 1962. However, the main on-going connections are through the BDAC students and graduates, almost all of whom spend some time working at T&PH during or after their studies. T&PH benefits from this as it is in receipt of a steady stream of unpaid but semi-skilled labour, and the BDAC benefits because its programme of study requires that students complete work experience on a biodynamic farm. T&PH and the BDAC also share physical resources and expertise on an informal basis, e.g. holding meetings on each other's premises and advising each other on technical matters, which is easy due to their adjacent physical location and gives them practical flexibility and a wider pool of resources and expertise to draw on (in addition, certain individuals share social ties that go beyond professional duties). Hence, it is clear that both organisations benefit from their relationship; conversely, no specific tensions between the organisations were voiced by staff during interviews.

7.2.1.2 The Biodynamic Agricultural Association

T&PH has maintained close links to the BDA over the years, since both of the farms are certified to the Demeter standard and both provide training for the BDA's apprentice scheme. In terms of the benefits that this bestows to each organisation, T&PH farms use the Demeter logo as a marketing tool on their products and receive advice and guidance from the BDA. However, by virtue of T&PH being one of the largest and most established Demeter-certified farms in the UK, the benefits seem to flow both ways; i.e. T&PH gives credibility to the BDA standard and provides ideas and learning back to the BDA. Moreover, T&PH-1, T&PH-3 and T&PH-4 all commented that the marketing value of the Demeter label was not a big factor for the farms, as brand awareness for Demeter is very low. Hence, the farms rely on their local connections and their own brands to market

their produce. In a joint interview, T&PH-1 and T&PH-2 explained that the principal motivation for the farms being engaged with the BDA is about supporting the wider biodynamic movement, as the BDA provides education and publicity, and “stands up” for biodynamic standards in ways that the farms cannot do themselves due to lack of time and resources. As for the apprentice scheme, the benefits to each reflect those mentioned in section 7.1.1.1 above with respect to the BDAC’s diploma students. So in summary, the relationship is collaborative and synergistic for the two organisations, but perhaps unexpectedly, the role of T&PH with respect to the BDA is almost one of patronage, rather than purely being about self-interest.

Moreover, there was mention of some tension on the side of T&PH, due to the Demeter standard being hard to achieve (T&PH-2) and being perceived at times as a “straight jacket” (T&PH-1). However, overall the attitude of T&PH towards the BDA and Demeter standards is that they are desirable and necessary for the development of the biodynamic movement.

7.2.1.3 The Biodynamic Land Trust

The relationship between the BDLT and T&PH revolves around, but goes beyond, the fact of the BDLT’s status as landlord of the Brambletye Fields. BDLT-1 is a fairly well-known personality within the biodynamic movement in the UK and abroad, and has personal and professional connections with various individuals at T&PH, including T&PH-1 and T&PH-2. So the relationships between these key individuals preceded the organisational link that was consolidated with the buy-out of the Brambletye Fields, which obviously benefits T&PH who would have otherwise, in all likelihood, lost their access to this area of land. But the organisational link has also given rise to other benefits for both organisations, in terms of reinforcing their connections to other organisations such as the SA – both the BDLT and T&PH have connections with the SA, the former through the SA’s land trust and the latter through the SA’s CSA advisory group – and increasing their profiles within the broader movement. Moreover, the circumstances surrounding the buy-out and leasing of the Brambletye Fields to T&PH gives credibility to the BDLT by providing a successful case study of the organisation’s model. The relationship between these organisations is still

young, so it may be that tensions could arise over time, but at the moment there are no obvious sources of conflict.

7.2.1.4 Transition Forest Row

It was members of TFR that first articulated the need for allotments to be made available at Tablehurst Farm (discussed in section 7.1.1.1 above). TFR was also involved in an attempt to raise community finance for the installation of solar photovoltaic panels at Tablehurst Farm. However, changes to the rules about feed-in tariffs introduced in 2011 meant that the initiative had to be fast-tracked using private finance. In both cases TFR acted as a gatekeeper to a local community of interested and engaged individuals for T&PH, and T&PH acted as a gatekeeper to land and resources for TFR's community of members. In the case of the allotments, this was principally for the benefit of TFR's members and hence TFR approached T&PH, but in the case of the solar photovoltaic installation, this was principally for the benefit of T&PH who were seeking finance. So, the relationship between the two organisations has been of mutual interest and potential support, though it has been more of a distanced relationship than those previously discussed. In addition to obvious practical explanations, this distance may be due in part to cultural differences between the two organisations/their members, as encapsulated by TFR-1's comment about T&PH below:

"I think we've got along very well. No area of discord there. I suppose the only thing is that the farm and the Steiner community have been here a lot longer than the transition group, and that I think is-- and the Steiner communities tend towards being more insular, shall we say. And that has taken a bit of time to work through, and their thinking has evolved, and they have looked to becoming more open. But that's a slow process. So that's the only area of issue there. I think their principles of local food and local people and community is-- I think there's a great deal of sympathy, so there hasn't been any-- But they are very involved practically in their own projects." (TFR-1)

7.2.1.5 *The Soil Association*

T&PH has a few different links to the SA, including the central involvement of T&PH-1 in the design of an SA-led training programme about CSA (discussed in section 7.1.1.2 above). In this situation, the SA drew on the expertise of T&PH-1 to further its own aims around the development of the CSA model in connection to organic food. Moreover, the SA has worked with T&PH to create case study documentation of the farms which it disseminates through its practitioner networks, and organises field trips to T&PH for farmers and growers. Again, this is clearly to the benefit of the SA as it gives credibility to the organisation's cause, but it is also to the benefit of T&PH, in terms of raising the profile of the organisation, which aids marketing to consumers and fundraising for projects. In addition, Tablehurst Farm has won several prizes for its meat products at the SA's annual national Organic Food Awards, another boost to its consumer marketing and public profile, whilst being a good story for the SA to tell about organic food. Hence, the SA plays an important role as a kind of umbrella body and promotional vehicle for the farms – a role that the BDA also plays, only without being able to achieve the same impact. In fact, the SA also has links with all of the other organisations in the network, except for TFR.

But despite the mutual benefits of co-operation, there is an acknowledged tension between the two organisations around the different standards that they promote. Summing up T&PH's regard for the SA, T&PH-3 said the following: "We share many visions of how to farm and do many things together but-- all the standards and everything-- they are very good at how they do things it's just that it's only organic. It's not biodynamic." Thus, the impression that I have formed is that, from the perspective of T&PH, the SA's support is partially undermined – or at least of less value than it could be – by virtue of their championing of organic, rather than biodynamic, principles. Nonetheless, what they lack in principles may be made up for in professionalism. In the words of BDAC-1: "I really like the Soil Association, you know, really they are so professional and they've really got their act together, and they're just really friendly and open and cooperative."

From the perspective of the BDA, its own links with the SA are “particularly strong” (BDA-1), as they work together closely on certification and standard-setting, collaborate and share information on land trusts and apprentice training, exchange articles for their magazines, and, “have had quite a lot of on-going meetings with people at various levels” (BDA-1). Nonetheless, BDA-1 made the following two comments about their relationship which I have quoted at length as I think that they are particularly telling – not just about the two organisations, but about the relationship between the biodynamic and organic movements.

“I think it is a cultural thing with the Soil Association, I think that there are a lot of people in the Soil Association who are quite principled about what they are doing and I think they see the Biodynamic Association as being principled and vice versa, so I think we feel that there is a common ground there that we have. It is not true of everybody, and there are some people in the Soil Association who want nothing to do with the BDA, so that’s fair enough. But there are quite a lot of people who really respect the BDA and recognise that it has had a strong influence on organic standards and policy, and want to have a close relationship” (BDA-1)

“At one time we were fairly wary of the Soil Association because we felt that they had a bit of a mission to be the only spokesman for sustainable farming in the UK and in a way were trying to dominate the scene. And I think that is what a lot of people thought, more so in the past; that they were quite aggressive in trying to promote their position, and that they perhaps didn’t want to collaborate but they wanted to take over. So when we were first approached by the Soil Association, many years ago, I was very cautious and wary of them. But I have since come to believe that there is a genuine wish for collaboration. I think perhaps that they have probably changed and matured as an organisation.” (BDA-1)

These two comments hint at significant synergies as well as historic tensions between the SA and other organisations within both movements, suggesting that the SA has acted collaboratively as well as competitively (more so in the past) with other CSOs. Table 9

below summarises these synergies and tensions as they have been shown to exist between T&PH and the five linked organisations.

Table 9. Synergies and tensions between T&PH and the organisations in its network

Org.	T&PH gains (synergies)	Organisation gains (synergies)	Tensions
BDAC	Unpaid semi-skilled personnel, access to resources and expertise	Training for students, access to resources and expertise	-
BDA	Technical advice and a marketing tool (certification), a way to support to the biodynamic movement	Training for apprentices, license fees, credibility for the Demeter scheme, and ideas and learning for standards development	Demeter standard hard to achieve – perceived by some as a ‘straight jacket’
BDLT	Access to land, reinforced connections with other orgs	Improved public profile and credibility, reinforced connections with other orgs	-
TFR	Access to a local community of interested and engaged individuals	Access to land and resources	Cultural differences b/w the two orgs – Steiner community perceived as insular
SA	Improved public profile and marketing to consumers	Access to expertise for development of CSA programme, credibility from use of case study, destination for farm visits	Promotion of different standards – biodynamic vs. organic; historic behaviour of SA perceived as aggressive and territorial (but now perceived as genuinely collaborative)

7.2.2 Formal relations

So, what kinds of formal relations (Sayer 1992) exist between T&PH and the linked organisations in this case? In terms of their activities, T&PH, the BDAC, the BDLT, the BDA and the SA are all primarily engaged in the food and farming sector, as compared to other policy/issue fields and sectors. However, they do cross over into other fields and sectors, notably education (for T&PH, the BDAC, the BDA and the SA), but also social care (T&PH), health (the SA) and finance (the BDLT). TFR, on the other hand, engages in a wide range of non-food-related activities. With 22 other topic groups in addition to the food and land group (including housing and building, cottage crafts, resources, car club, education and skills, local living economy, storytelling, business and finance, and so on), TFR relates to

numerous different policy/issue fields and sectors. In terms of their identifications with social movements, the situation is similar. T&PH, the BDAC, the BDLT, the BDA and the SA all associate themselves with the biodynamic and/or organic movements, whereas, for TFR they see themselves as part of a local or grassroots activist movement.

Incidentally, up until the 1940s organic and biodynamic farming were arguably part of the same movement (Demeter USA 2009) and they have continued to make frequent crossovers in subsequent years. At the current time many biodynamic farmers that belong to the Biodynamic Association (BDA) in the UK are also members of the Soil Association (SA); a notable example of this is the current patron of the BDA, Patrick Holden, who was formerly the director of the Soil Association.

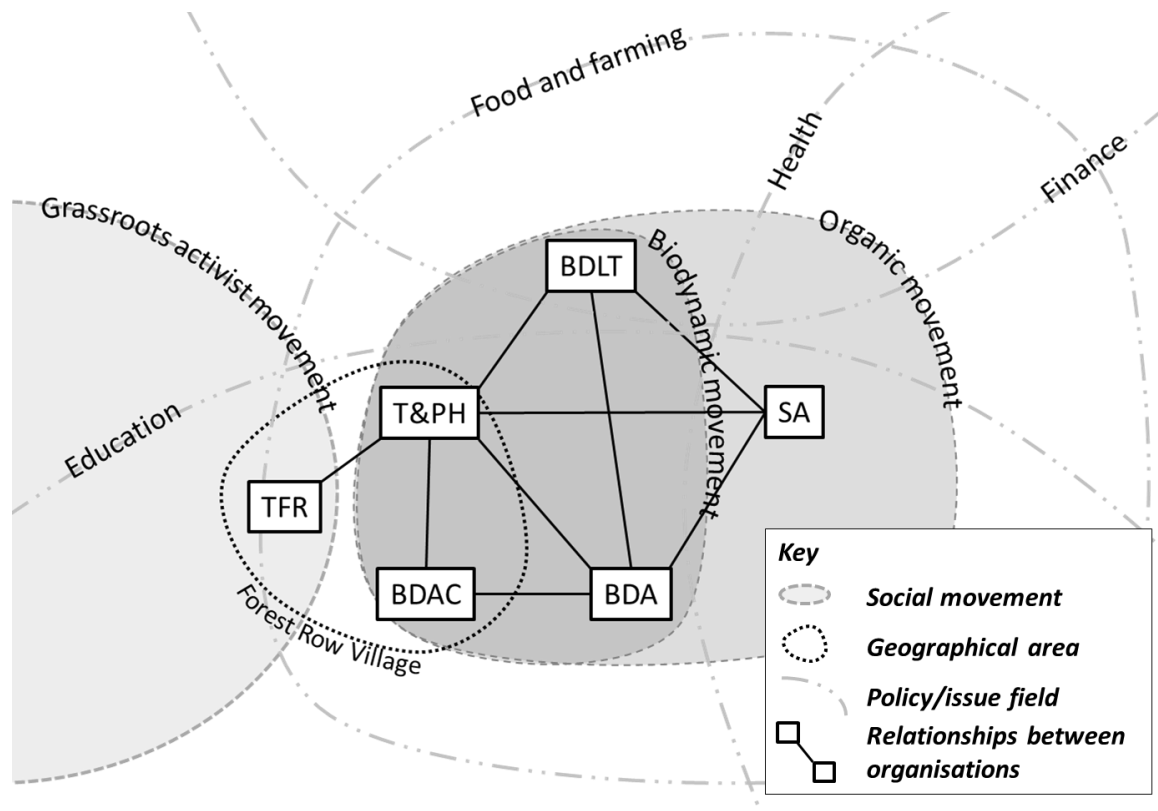


Figure 18. Social worlds/arenas map showing the collective commitments of and relationships between T&PH and the organisations in its network

In Figure 18 (above) I have attempted to represent both the substantial and formal relationships between the organisations in this case using a social worlds/arenas map (Clarke 2005), see CHAPTER 5, section 5.2.1.

7.3 Intentions

Now, in this section, I will seek to provide some provisional answers to the following questions (from CHAPTER 5, section 5.2.2):

1. To what extent do the organisations' intended impacts and the perceived roles that the organisations play in wider change processes – as presented in official documentation and/or espoused by individuals from within the organisations – correspond to the roles in the framework?
2. What degree of similarity/agreement is there amongst (a) the properties that the organisations' associate with sustainable food systems, as presented in official documentation and/or espoused by individuals from within the organisations, and (b) those individuals' espoused theories concerning the most likely drivers of transition towards sustainability?

First I will look at T&PH in detail, and then I will look at the linked organisations, providing just a summary of the related findings.

7.3.1 Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch

Q1: Intended impacts and roles of the organisations

As indicated in bits of documentation and tested through interviewing key actors within the organisation, T&PH's 'mission' is principally about practising community farming and biodynamic agriculture (Fynes-Clinton 2013). Some of the ideals closely associated with this are to "be self-sustaining", "embody a deeply sustainable approach to farming" and "work in a more spiritual way" (Ravenscroft and Hanney 2011; T&PH-4). Neither the co-op nor the farms have official mission statements, but the co-op does espouse certain aims and objectives, from time to time, in external publications. For instance, in a case study written by co-op members, the following overarching aim was noted: "to re-establish the connection between the process of food production and the people who consume the food, creating support for sustainable farming practices into the future" (Marshall No date). This is a strong statement of intention that links the activities of the

organisation to the purposes of 1) addressing more general concerns about contemporary processes of food production and consumption, and 2) supporting sustainable practices in the future. Thus, there is a sense in which the organisation views itself – in this instance – as an intentional agent in a transition towards sustainability in future food systems.

However, this view is not necessarily representative of all the individuals within the organisation, and, as just mentioned, neither is there such a thing as the ‘official line’. In fact, mirroring the wariness that certain key actors from the organisation towards communicating and advertising what the farm does and is about (see section 7.1.1.3), T&PH-1 expressed wariness towards adopting an official mission for T&PH. In this individual’s opinion, doing so carries the danger of excluding valuable perspectives and creating a source of division and conflict within the organisation. Thus, when I interviewed other key actors about their own views on the role that T&PH might play in a more sustainable future, the responses that I received were varied. Under one perspective, both farms were viewed as promising and viable models for the future, with the potential to be replicated elsewhere (T&PH-4). Under another perspective, it was acknowledged that biodynamic farming probably won’t be the future of a more sustainable food system, whereas other alternative approaches – including “permaculture, small-scale agriculture, and more people growing their own food” – were seen as playing important roles (T&PH-2).

These statements indicate that there is not a straightforward or singular relationship between the views of key actors from within the organisation, concerning the roles that the organisation plays in wider change processes and the RIT framework. In a separate moment of reflection on the value and purpose of farming biodynamically, the same individual (T&PH-2) provided a slightly different perspective on this:

“You have to champion the small guy who’s doing it very, very well, and you have to champion it absolutely, because once you guys start arguing, then these guys will just combat you anyway, so you have to set these boundaries [...] because if we aren’t holding it together and championing that cause then we aren’t going

anywhere. In that sense that is a boundary around biodynamics [...] there has to be that responsibility. To make sure that there is something that people can touch and feel and see. Otherwise you end up being amorphous and you end up arguing.”
(T&PH-2)

Under this perspective it seems the purpose of farming biodynamically is less about pioneering a model that can be replicated and/or scaled up to form the basis of more sustainable future food systems, and more about pushing the envelope in terms of clearly and tangibly demonstrating just how well (i.e. how sustainably) it is possible to farm. Either way, the intended impacts seem to correspond with the grassroots innovation role.

Q2: Ends and means

Likewise, when individuals from T&PH talked in interview about the properties that they associated with sustainable food systems, their accounts were also varied. The property of ‘diversity’ (“diversity of technique and approach”) was described on two separate occasions, whilst other properties that were described by only one individual each included ‘continuity’ (“can we continue doing this for another thousand years?”) and ‘consciousness’ (“food being held within the consciousness of people”). Furthermore, when they discussed their own theories of change (they were asked to identify who/what they consider to be the most likely drivers of a transition to sustainability and how a transition might come about), two quite different accounts were provided. There was some agreement about the principle role of professional training and education for farmers in a future transition, but there was also scepticism about the likelihood of an intentional transition being possible. Hence, one individual expressed the opinion that a transition to sustainability could only come from stress and shocks to the system: “it has to come from a crisis. It has to. The most likely avenue is a monoculture, or a GM crop or whatever, succumbing to a strain of x, y, z, or an e-coli outbreak” (T&PH-2).

All-in-all, the responses of T&PH key actors to these questions and the opinions that they expressed within open discussions reveal that they are largely familiar and comfortable with thinking about the organisation as involved in transition towards sustainability.

Nonetheless, quite what role that they intend to play in transition, or think that they can play, varies between individuals. This is mirrored by disparity between their views about the key properties of sustainable food systems and the key drivers of a future transition. Certainly they did not present a straightforward or singular view of the organisation's role in a transition towards sustainability that corresponds discretely to any one of the roles in the framework.

7.3.2 The linked organisations

I have summarised my findings about the stated intentions of the five linked organisations in Table 11 (at the end of the chapter). In the rest of this section I will briefly discuss them.

Q1: Intended impacts and roles of the organisations

The intended impacts of the BDAC, the BDLT and the BDA all correspond to the niche development role. Where the BDAC aims to develop the capabilities of biodynamic farmers (co-ordination), the BDLT sets out to develop a vital resource base – the availability of land in trust (institutional infrastructure), and the BDA seeks to increase the amount of biodynamic food being produced and consumed by developing different forms of technical knowledge and networks (aggregation, institutional infrastructure and co-ordination). However, the views of individuals about the roles that these organisations' play in wider change processes (perceived roles) correspond less obviously to niche development (see the third column from the left in Table 11 above).

Moreover, the intended impacts of TFR – as well as the perceived roles that the organisation plays in wider change processes – also correspond with niche development, though in a more general sense (i.e. supporting the grassroots and nurturing small-scale, local projects in unspecified ways). And finally, though the intended impacts of the SA appear straightforward in their condensed format, the SA's more detailed strategic objectives reveal a nuanced approach that seeks to drive change across different arenas. They encompass different elements, including influencing government and mainstream

businesses, driving consumer behaviour change and transforming institutions and communities, growing the organic movement and market, and developing and crafting models for the future. Thus, they potentially correspond to multiple roles in the RIT framework, though they are articulated in a different way.

Q2: Ends and means

For all of the organisations in the network, the particular method or approach to food and farming that they are in the business of championing – whether organic, biodynamic, or local/grassroots – embodies, for them, the most sustainable option for the future. Nonetheless, amongst the biodynamic organisations (T&PH, BDAC, BDLT, BDA), the properties that they associate with sustainable food systems are much more varied and are articulated less clearly with respect to biodynamic methods than the properties associated with sustainable food systems according to key actors from those organisations that champion other methods or approaches (TFR and especially the SA).

On the other hand, the different theories of change expressed by key actors from all six organisations seem to cluster around five principle variations. Most commonly expressed were the notions that a transition to sustainability will be driven by (1) stress and shocks to the system, principally economic, and (2) education, training and behaviour change. Closely following these was the idea that change will be driven by (3) government intervention. Other views revolved around the idea that change will be driven by (4) purposeful interventions and cross-sector partnerships at/from all levels of society, and/or (5) grassroots action and beacon projects. Altogether, there is quite a range of views about the likely drivers of transition amongst the individuals from the different organisations in this case.

--

So, having considered the extent to which the various organisations' activities are characteristic of the four roles in the RIT framework (section 7.1), presented my observations about the substantial and formal relationships between the organisations in

the study (section 7.2), and explored the intentions behind the organisations' activities, I will now move on to the next case study.

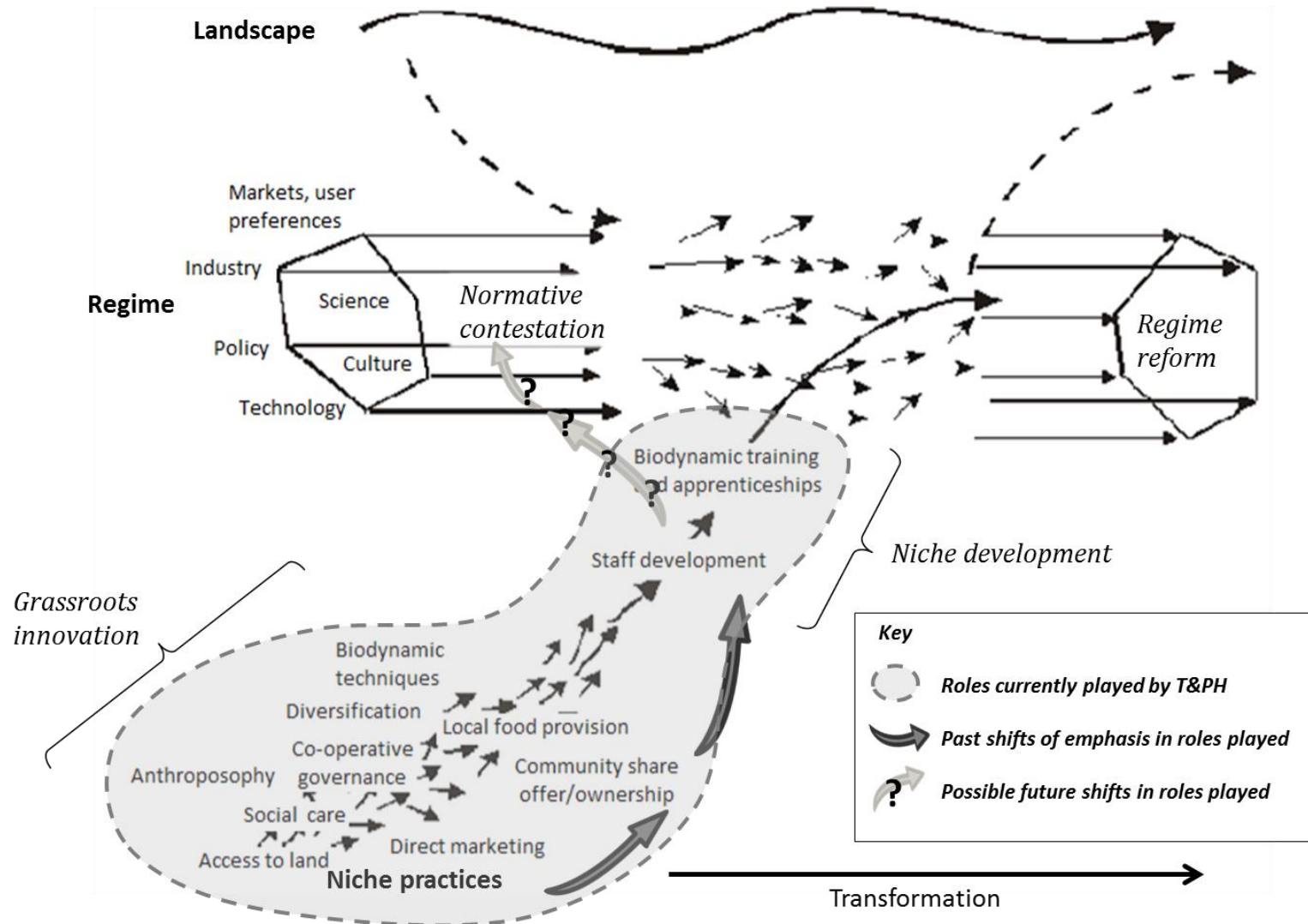


Figure 19. 'Map' of the roles currently played by T&PH in transitions (text within shaded area), and the shifting positions adopted by the organisation over time, with respect to these roles (shaded arrows). Diagram adapted from Geels (2002).

Table 10. Activities carried out by the organisations under the headings of the four roles in transition.

CSO/Role	Grassroots innovation	Niche development	Normative contestation	Regime reform
T&PH	Biodynamic techniques Farm diversification Direct marketing Community shareholders Co-operative governance Anthroposophy Allotments Care farming	BDAC training BDA apprentices Staff development		
BDAC	Biodynamic techniques Anthroposophy	Accredited training programme Distance learning programme		
BDLT	Community shareholders Co-operative governance Access to land	Research and dissemination Guidance and technical assistance Network-building		
BDA		Standards development Research and dissemination Guidance and technical assistance Knowledge transfer Training workshops Apprentice scheme Supply of specialist inputs Breeding programme	←	<i>Certification and labelling of products and supply chains</i>
TFR	Seed swaps Garden share Community gardening	Network building Research and dissemination <i>Community planning processes</i>	Education and awareness raising Campaigning to influence public debates Lobbying local businesses →	
SA		Producer Support Local Food strand Duchy Originals Future Farming Low Carbon Farming Crofting Connections Apprenticeship scheme Land Trust Land Partnerships Sustainable Food Cities Network	Keep Britain Buzzing campaign Cottoned On campaign Food for Life Partnership Not In My Banger campaign ←	Food for Life Catering Mark AssureWel Project <i>Production standards</i>

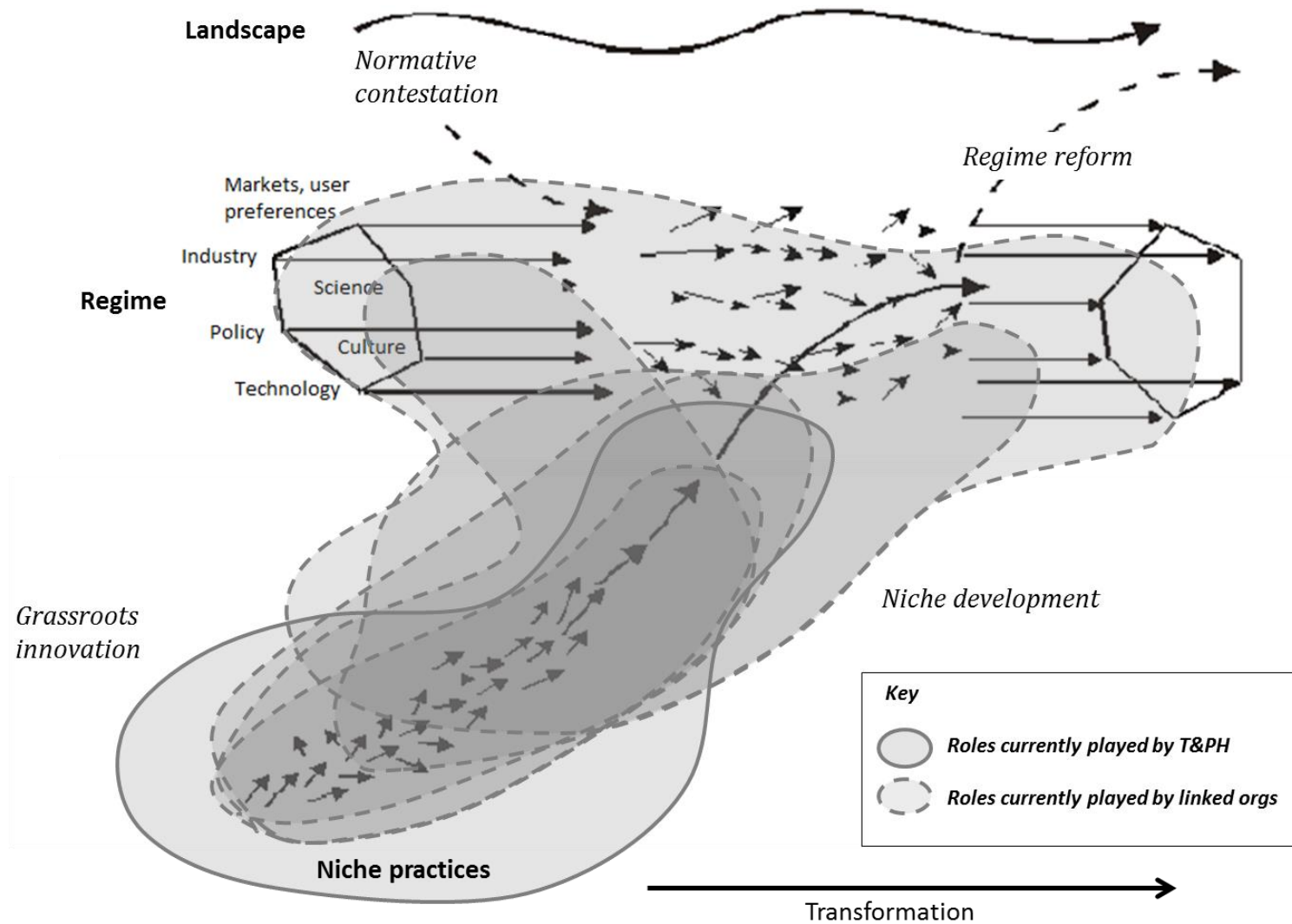


Figure 20. 'Map' of the roles currently played in transitions by T&PH (shaded area with solid outline) and five other CSOs that it works in association with (shaded areas with broken outlines). Diagram adapted from Geels (2002).

Table 11. Stated intentions of the six organisations and related views held by some of their members

CSO/ Intentions	Intended impacts of the organisation	Perceived roles of the organisation in wider change processes	Key properties associated with sustainable food systems	Key drivers of a transition to sustainability (theory of change)
T&PH	To address general concerns about food production and consumption, and support sustainable practices in the future	Through the practice of community farming and biodynamic agriculture T&PH 'pushes the envelope' of sustainable agriculture and may provide a model for a more sustainable future Biodynamics is probably not the future of farming (other alternative systems will play a role)	Diversity Continuity Consciousness	Training and education of farmers Stress and shocks to the system
BDAC	To professionalise the organic and biodynamic sector	A sustainable future would be organic by law and biodynamic by choice The BDAC enables individuals to transform themselves , gaining confidence and skills	Small scale/local Entrepreneurial	Government intervention
BDLT	To secure land for biodynamic farming	Biodynamic farming is the most desirable option, with wider changes to the food system being necessary The BDLT is creating a new path for biodynamic farming , by developing effective ways of securing land	Equity	Purposeful interventions at/from all levels of society Beacon projects
BDA	To increase the amount of biodynamic food being produced and consumed, by: Developing, promoting and disseminating knowledge of biodynamic methods	The BDA aims to spread Biodynamic farming , which it believes is the way forward to build a sustainable future	Choice and power for consumers	Economic stress to the system

TFR	To support grassroots projects that foster resilience to peak oil and climate change	TFR nurtures small-scale, local projects , which it believes may be the seeds of a post-crash world	Local/regional scale	Stress and shocks to the system combined with education and behaviour change
SA	To spread the production and consumption of organic food	Organic farming is the best way to address future threats to sustainability The SA is well placed to help make Organic and similar techniques the norm	Organic principles, i.e. health, ecology, care, fairness Organic, i.e. chemical-free Appropriate scale Culture of care	Economic stress to the system Government intervention, education and behaviour change Grassroots action and government intervention Behaviour change and cross-sector partnerships

CHAPTER 8. The Fife Diet

In the following sections I will use material from interviews that I conducted with individuals from each of the organisations in this case, including four individuals from the Fife Diet and one from each of the linked organisations (see Appendix B). The rest of this chapter is organised in the same way as the previous chapter, i.e. into three sections: 8.1 Activities, 8.2 Relationships, and 8.3 Intentions.

8.1 Activities

In contrast to T&PH, the FD was selected as the focal organisation in this case because it seemed to embody the role of niche development. In this section I will test this assumption, by exploring the extent to which the FD's activities are characteristic of this and the other roles in the RIT framework (section 8.1.1). In addition, I will consider the extent to which the linked organisations' activities are characteristic of the different roles in transition (section 8.1.2). The core characteristics of each role were first defined in CHAPTER 4.

8.1.1 The Fife Diet

8.1.1.1 Grassroots innovation

Novelty

The Fife Diet started with a novel cognitive practise; it arose from an unconventional way of thinking about food. From the outset, the FD was conceived of and talked about as an “experiment”; a challenge to attempt something totally out of the ordinary⁵⁴. The

⁵⁴ Using the search terms “Fife Diet Experiment” in Google on Monday, 11 November 2013 returned more than 50 unique results in which the FD is referred to as an experiment (i.e. as alternately a “diet experiment”, “eating experiment”, “experiment in local eating”, “local eating experiment”, “local food experiment”, “experiment in 'locavorism'”, “experiment to push people in eastern Scotland into thinking actively about the source of their food”, “personal experiment”, and so on). The sources of these citations include the FD's own website, the Scottish Government's website, various local to national media outlets, other organisations' websites, and blogs.

concept – to eat mostly local food for a year – was regarded with incredulity by the regional media when it was first made public by the project’s founders (Blythman 2009). Though the concept of a local (or “locavore”, see Rohrer 2007) diet had been established elsewhere in the world, there had never been a comparable initiative in Scotland at the time that the FD was launched. To avoid confusion I will refer to this – the original core concept of the FD – as ‘the 80:20 challenge’. This choice of words also reflects the thinking behind the challenge, summed up by FD-1 as follows: “Members commit to an 80:20 ratio of local (produced within the region of Fife) to imported food⁵⁵. The ratio deliberately inverts the fact that 80% of the UK's food is grown abroad and only 20% produced internally⁵⁶” (Strang 2011).

In fact, the novelty of the endeavour meant that its champions (a young couple with children, plus a small number of other families who joined them in the first year of the challenge) had to go against the grain of incumbent systems of food provisioning in a very tangible sense, engaging in novel technical practises related to the sourcing, preparing and cooking of ingredients. In order to eat a nutritionally varied diet that was made up of foods that had not left the county of Fife since they were lifted from the ground or sea, the couple and their friends had to visit a great number of individual outlets and go direct to farmers to purchase ingredients. This experience was a far cry from the norm – and from their past practices – of visiting the supermarket, where all of these ingredients could be bought in one single shop. They even found that it was not possible for them to purchase a basic staple that was nonetheless being grown within the county on a large scale (oats), as the entire crop was tied into a contract with a multinational food processing company. Over-and-above the difficulties of sourcing ingredients, however, were the issues of how to prepare and cook food from what was a significantly limited

⁵⁵ There is no fixed rule about how FD members should determine the ratio of local to non-local food that they consume – i.e. by price, mass, volume or item. Instead, it seems that the figure of 80:20 is intended more as a heuristic than a precise measure.

⁵⁶ I cannot replicate the figure cited for the proportion of the total food consumed in the UK that is first imported (80%). A 2008 Cabinet Office report suggests that the figure might be closer to 40% (Cabinet Office Strategy Unit (2008). *Food Matters: Towards a Strategy for the 21st Century*. C. Office. London, Crown Copyright.)

range of raw materials. Having been accustomed to what food campaigners have called ‘Permanent Global Summer Time’ – i.e. the ability, thanks to the existence of global food supply chains, to buy a wide variety of fresh produce regardless of the season – the couple and their friends had to adjust to eating seasonally.

Hence, as the FD gained momentum, members and funding, it started to branch out into a range of different activities that would make it easier for members to fulfil the challenge. Most of these will be discussed below, as they are characteristic of the development role. However, one initiative in particular addressed the need for new technical knowledge and capabilities. In the first few years, the FD co-ordinated a series of growing trials to see if it was possible to cultivate a wider range of different crops within the county than were previously in production:

“Earlier on in our work we were doing some trial crops seeing what would work in Fife that isn’t really being explored by farmers. And that was successful in that we kind of learnt a lot from it, but it wasn’t successful in that it wasn’t actually producing much [...] and what we worked out was that we need to be working with farmers more” (FD-3)

Although the results were mixed, the trials were part of a wider process of learning and experimentation that was becoming central to what the FD was about as it evolved from a project into an organisation. Over time, another way that they dealt with these difficult novel technicalities was by embracing the idea of learning together as an experimental community. In order to do this, and for other reasons beside, the FD developed a series of novel social practises around what became the organisation’s “core methodology [...] this idea of eating food together as a community” (FD-1). At the start there were informal bring-and-share suppers at members’ homes, where attendees could share recipes and get inspiration and insights from each other. But as popularity increased, these grew into pot-luck lunches held in village halls, school buildings, and other public venues. One year they tried out an idea that was less successful, which they called the ‘Unplugged Picnic’, the idea being to bring and share food that members had grown and/or prepared

themselves without the aid of wired technology. Another variant was cookery evenings, which started out being very interactive, with everyone cooking their own dish. One such event was called 'Weird Veg', and the aim was to help people to cook with things that they were not familiar with from their veg boxes. As the methodology was developed, these cookery evenings became more like demonstrations, but FD-4 talked with excitement in an interview about how engaged the participants are nonetheless:

"We just a got a facilitator in who was a local chef and I provided him with a veg box and a few mystery ingredients [...] there were people who had absolutely never heard of the fife diet, couldn't tell you what was in season. And after the event everyone was just chatting away about local food [...] I think it was just quite an informal, supportive atmosphere and I think that worked" (FD-4)

Responsiveness

In order for all of these events to be successful there was a significant social issue that had to be resolved. As around three quarters of the FD members are – and have been – women with young families, their ability to participate in events was constrained by childcare responsibilities. So, rather than accepting this limitation, the FD applied successfully for funding to provide crèche facilities at all of their public events. This organisational arrangement is both novel, by virtue of being against the norm for the events sector, as well as being responsive to the needs of the members. Another FD development that had the characteristics of being both novel and responsive to the needs and interests of local people was the creation of a new allotment site for community gardening and individual plot-holders spaces within the village of Burntisland:

"Starting an allotment is not new but starting an allotment and having a community consultation program to design that is new-- and then they said what we need is a communal growing space as well [...] that caused some trouble [...] you know we had councillors coming and saying 'why are you doing all these alterations?'-- We didn't just want a council thing there, we wanted something owned and shared by the wider community" (FD-1)

The characteristic of responsiveness applies to a lot of the activities that the FD has run over the years since it was started. For instance, FD-4 was emphatic about how the staff team strive to respond to the needs of individual members, saying: “we try to relate to our members one-to-one and give everyone an in-depth experience when they come along to one of our events”. Moreover, though the aim of the allotment project was to create a site where alternative practises of food production could be pioneered and nurtured, it is also responsive to other social needs of the local community, providing a space for children and adults to learn and be cared for:

“So basically she turned a piece of wasteland in Burntisland into this thriving community garden. And she set up things like kids club, which she carried out every Thursday. And it’s getting kids outside, working, with mud, picking up snails, that kind of thing. Just getting a bit more connected to what they eat. And she also does work and play days.” (FD-4)

In addition to the original allotment site developed in Burntisland, the FD has also made headway towards developing another site – in partnership with other local groups – in the town of Kirkcaldy (the largest in Fife). Like the Burntisland site, this site (known as “the Kaleyard”) will provide space for both individual and communal plots, as well as hosting a series of workshops on topics such as composting, worm care, organic and permaculture gardening, priming your garden, foraging and so on. The spirit of these community growing workshops parallels the community dining events discussed above – the idea is to learn about local food together as a local community. Like the community dining events, this holds within it the notion of the FD being ‘rooted’ to and capable of generating direct benefits in its locality (i.e. responsiveness), including the villages, towns and cities of the county of Fife.

Another related theme that reappeared in all of my interviews with FD staff concerned fostering a specific kind of relationship with the membership, i.e. “not providing a service, but creating a forum and then letting the energy from the members do it” (FD-1). In essence, it’s a form of responsiveness that is not about asking members what they want

and then providing it, but about inspiring and enabling members to both define and participate actively in making their food visions into reality. It is more mutualistic (doing something together for mutual benefit) than philanthropic (doing something for the benefit of someone else). And although this carries the downside of often taking longer, the belief amongst staff from the FD is that it will ensure that the practical developments they're delivering will have more longevity and lead to deeper forms of engagement from local people:

"It doesn't matter that visibility and impact takes longer for the people to see [...] if we want to have everything bottom up and everything is going to go through community consultation, that's the only way it's really authentic and it works really well and people take ownership of it [...] You look at the Kaleyard Garden that we're creating in coordination with other groups, there we are looking at 15 years. But we really think this is going to translate into sustained impact and ownership of the project and even all these kind of wider ideas of food sovereignty." (FD-2)

Protection

Thinking again of the characteristics of the grassroots innovation role, what might emerge from this deeper form of community engagement in the longer term are different forms of protection as people start becoming more aware of the direct social and sustainability benefits that they generate in the local area. However, up to this point in time, the only significant form of protection for its novel practices that the FD has enjoyed is the funding that it received from the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund. This should not be downplayed, as the injection of cash (close to £144,000), which allowed three new members of staff to be employed, has been an important enabler for the organisation's work since 2009 (The Scottish Government 2009b). Interestingly, the cash sum was of a similar magnitude to the injection of cash that T&PH raised through their community share offer in 1995 (close to £150,000), without considering inflation (Ravenscroft and Hanney 2011).

8.1.1.2 Niche development

Aggregation

Starting with ‘aggregation’, this concept applies to activities that gather together lessons learned from individual projects – particularly about processes (e.g. ‘setting up’, ‘recruiting volunteers’, ‘getting planning permission’, etc.) – and come up with generic principles that can be re-applied across other projects within the alternative food niche. At the level of organisations and initiatives, the FD doesn’t provide this service. However, at the level of households, there is ample evidence of the FD embodying this characteristic of the development role. Drawing together and making sense of members’ learning experiences is seen as a fundamental part of the FD’s methodology. One of the FD staff gave a sense of this when talking about the need to develop “a kind of a model”:

“How do you actually do the Fife Diet, and do it well and properly, good food, healthy, affordable? [...] And so we’ve drawn on the experiences of our members and seen how they’re doing it and what’s working for them, because what we find is that people do it in quite different ways and that’s good and interesting and we need to kind of figure that out.” (FD-1)

The ways and places in which this aggregation work is done include the face-to-face skills and sharing events mentioned above, as well as through the online members’ community that is hosted on the FD website. The lessons and experiences of individual members are written up and catalogued on the website in various sections. For instance, there is an interactive food map and a long list of Fife-based producers, traders and retailers with links to their websites and contact information, which has been amassed over the years from members’ contributions in addition to research undertaken by FD staff. There are also specific tips for vegetarians and vegans, a long list of recipes using local ingredients, guidelines about the seasonality of different foods, and ideas about how to save money on the diet – i.e. covering most of the practical nuts-and-bolts of how to do the diet – much of which has been contributed by members over the past few years. Finally, there is also an app on the site that allows members to log the amounts and types of food they

eat, and then calculates the carbon emissions related to their diets. Over time, members can therefore monitor and adapt their food buying and preparation to reduce their emissions (or ‘carbon footprints’, as they are called on the site).

Infrastructure creation

As described above, the website also represents part of the ‘institutional infrastructure’ created by the FD for the local food niche, as it facilitates the creation of social networks that span multiple local milieus (Geels and Deuten 2006). This applies to users of the site that are from the locality of Fife, as well as people and organisations from much further afield. The FD recently held a conference on ‘Food Sovereignty’ to which they invited guests from Ecuador, Spain and Austria, thereby reinforcing these (very cosmopolitan) networks with physical meetings.

Another aspect of infrastructure creation that the FD has been engaging in concerns linking the producers, distributors, retailers and other enterprises involved in local food supply chains to each other and to FD members who wish to consume their products. Over the years the FD has done this in a few different ways. It has encouraged local food enterprises to showcase their produce at members’ events. It has put producers in touch with processors and started conversations that have led to the establishment of new local supply chains. And it has helped members to start up their own enterprises to supply sought-after foods to the FD community. Moreover, this aspect of the FD’s work is something that is likely to carry on and evolve over the coming years:

“So that’s what, in the next couple of years, we’re hoping to develop much more of [...] so I’m starting really with the research base and talking to farmers and finding out how that could work for them and looking at that distribution from farmer to community shop maybe, or co-op, or even just high street shops that are supportive of what we’re doing” (FD-3)

Co-ordination and framing

Next, turning to ‘co-ordination’, this characteristic is about the ways that the FD shapes and influences the local-level activities of other projects within the niche. With respect to existing members’ and their households, FD-4 was employed with this intention in mind. In her own words, her task is primarily about “pushing them on to the next stage – to maybe growing their own or maybe sourcing a bit more locally” (FD-4). More broadly, she described her job as being about “getting into communities” (ibid.) and “encouraging behaviour change” (ibid.); a goal that applies not only to the existing membership, but also to householders and communities across Fife. An on-going initiative within the organisation that puts this plan into action is the ‘Three Cities’ project. The FD has started working with “schools, nurseries, tenants and residents associations, maybe some local police, that kind of thing” (FD-4) in specific areas of the three largest cities within Fife (Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline and Glenrothes), in order to try and replicate some of the developments that they have brought about in Burntisland. The areas targeted are those that are considered to provide the best opportunity for the FD to reach a wider spectrum of the public than they have previously. The initiative has three years of funding and hopes to stimulate and spin-off FD activities in nine towns and cities during that period.

So clearly, within the initiative just described, there is the intention to shape and influence activities in multiple local milieus (co-ordination) – and there is evidence that it is working in Kirkcaldy, where the Kaleyard is under development. On another scale, the FD itself has become regarded as a model worth replicating in other locales – including Glasgow, Cornwall, Tipperary (Ireland) and Austria – a fact that FD-2 considers to be one of the main achievements of the organisation. Though the level of active involvement on the behalf of the FD in these developments has been relatively low, another recent initiative takes a more proactive stance towards spreading the model beyond Fife. Together with WWF-UK, the FD launched the ‘Seed Truck’ in 2012. This initiative saw a truck powered on recycled chip fat oil going “right across Scotland” (FD-1) delivering workshops to demonstrate and spread best practices for communal gardening projects. They also invited another organisation, based in Glasgow, to join them and deliver cooking

workshops that would spread and celebrate Scottish cuisine and cultivate a vibrant food culture.

“It’s a relay. They go to one region with their dish and cook it for them and ask them what their dish is and they cook it, and then at the next region they cook the last region’s dish for them and then ask what theirs is and they cook it, and so on.”

(FD-1)

Brokering

Finally, thinking about ‘brokering’, the FD has, on a number of occasions, encouraged regime actors to become actively involved in niche development, though this has not been a major focus or explicit strategy in their work until recently. An example includes working with the local unitary council in Fife (an important actor in the incumbent food regime in Fife) to support their activities, for example by granting planning permission for the two community gardens, hiring out public buildings to FD members for free, and promoting the organisation’s activities.

8.1.1.3 Normative contestation

Legitimation

In the case of the FD, all of these characteristics of normative contestation are evident. Starting with legitimation, the processes of identifying, developing and then targeting emotionally resonant messages is something that has been practiced within the organisation from the beginning. Talking about why the FD has become so widely known, FD-4 claimed that it is the ‘human story’ surrounding the project’s founders that has provided the element of believability and genuineness needed to catch people’s attention and interest:

“I think it’s just a human story, because it’s genuine [...] and I think people have just latched onto that and thought, yeah, I totally believe in this. And I think that’s why it’s taken off.” (FD-4)

In fact, the FD has drawn on considerable expertise and awareness in this area. In addition to the couple that founded the FD, who have backgrounds in journalism at the BBC and in art and design, one of the earliest members recruited to the project is a well-known independent food writer. Joanna Blythman has published a number of best-selling books that highlight unsustainability in the food system (including ‘Not on the Label’ and ‘Bad Food Britain’), and writes regularly for the Guardian and Observer, as well as a range of regional media outlets and trade publications. However, it is not only these three that possess awareness about messaging. In interviews, other members of staff showed a keen interest and concern about getting the messages right too. Talking about the biggest difficulties that she has faced in her work, FD-3 particularly highlighted motivational messaging and communication with the FD’s different stakeholders:

“My sense is that farmers are quite culturally conservative [...] and the propositions that we have are quite radical, for new food distribution systems and stuff, and it may be that it’s quite hard to communicate through those cultural differences [...] And I think that for lots of people there’s a perception that environmental motivations are wacky and that’s not where they’re coming from [...] What I see in the local community work that I’ve done around growing, I think the biggest pull is people wanting to connect with food again, whether that be for their children or just for them, and it’s about being outside and growing things. I don’t think the wider message about climate change is motivating people” (FD-3)

Furthermore, in another discussion about the growing trials, FD-3 described how peoples’ concerns about their own health on the diet motivated her to “send a message” to them through practical action and demonstration:

“People get concerned about nutrition and so one of the things with the trials – well two of the things – was focussing on protein. So one was quinoa and the other was beans for drying and storing. Both of them grew really well, and so we were trying to send a message that there are alternatives, that are not necessarily easily

available, but that it's not that we don't have the capacity to grow food that's going to fulfil our nutritional needs." (FD-3)

Campaigning

The FD has also actively sought good relationships with local, regional and national news media outlets, including the Guardian and Observer, the Independent, the Scotsman, the Herald Scotland, the Scottish Daily Record, STV local, Fife Today and the Dunfermline Press, who have all provided positive news coverage of the organisation's activities and related local food developments over the past 12 months. In general, looking at a cross section of documentary materials from or related to the FD – i.e. including events promotions, news media coverage, editorials and interviews, web pages, and talks – the vast majority of the messaging coming from the FD is about increasing public support and consumer demand for alternative (local) food and food systems. Commentary from FD-1 is often full of up-beat messages, and decries 'doom-and-gloom' environmentalism. For instance, in the following two excerpts from newspaper interviews, he attempts to define the FD in a positive light:

"A celebration of local goodness, not an exercise in self-denial"

"It's not a back-to-nature movement rejecting the 21st century. It's a flexible, consciousness-raising exercise to show what realistic changes individuals can make while enjoying local food eaten in season"

Explaining this up-beat approach in interview, FD-1 commented that:

"I think people are at the moment quite scared if they are not in denial, and if they are in denial then they are also quite depressed, so coming to a community centre where there is food and it's good-- then that is attractive to people. I think the whole thing is that the environmental movement for a long time has been trying to say you can't do this, you can't do that, and there has been a kind of-- And I think when we came along and said, 'you know what, there are some big issues here but

we can have better food', it's a much more positive invitation to people and it makes people feel part of it" (FD-1)

As suggested by the growing trials example given above, the FD makes use of messaging to increase support and demand in a variety of ways – not just through broadcast media, the website and paper campaign materials. A different sort of campaign that the FD has run in the past two years – it is planned for this year, 2013, too – is an annual event that they call 'Blasda' (which is Gaelic for 'tasty'). FD-2 described Blasda as "a cultural feast event of food, celebrating culture and food". During the month of September, the Fife Diet co-ordinates and promotes feast events that are delivered by more than forty individual community organisations across Scotland.

In fact much of the work that the FD staff members are involved in encompasses an element of campaigning. Some examples that I have already mentioned include the information provision on the website, which is designed to inspire people to grow, shop and eat more local food, and the cooking and growing evenings and workshops, which have the same purpose, though they achieve this through practical demonstration and guidance. The Three Cities initiative and the Seed Truck are also designed to increase public support and demand for local food. Both use traditional campaign methods, such as holding stalls in shopping malls, town squares and markets. However, there is an element of novelty involved, as members of staff manning the stall operate a 'smoothie bike'. The smoothie bike is a pedal-operated device that blends fruit into drinks and is apparently very good at pulling a crowd. In the words of FD-4, "It's a good draw; if you get one person stopping, then the whole family stops and if you keep them there other people feel more confident about coming over".

In contrast to the above, I found very little evidence of activities that seek to challenge or intensify public dissatisfaction with the incumbent regime. One partial exception to this is the 'Magic Porridge Pot' workshop, which is delivered as part of the Food Truck project. It's a bit different to the other workshops run by the FD, as it uses storytelling to encourage children to develop awareness of the impacts of overconsumption:

“It’s an old European Folk Tale about the Magic Porridge Pot. The girl is kind of destitute and she meets a magical figure who gives her this magical pot [...] and it’s good because it gives you free porridge, but the trouble is it keeps giving porridge and it overflows and this was used as a method to talk about excess and overconsumption” (FD-1)

Lobbying

Again, in terms of the ‘lobbying’ characteristic, I found little evidence of the FD involved in activities that are explicitly designed to persuade policymakers to act differently (i.e. in ways that favour alternative systems and/or disfavour the incumbent regime). However, one major exception is the production and launch, which took place in April 2012, of their manifesto. An email invitation to the launch event proclaimed that the ‘New Food Manifesto’ is the FD’s contribution to the food and drink policy framework in Scotland. Since then, it has attracted some political attention, getting an extended mention in the Scottish Parliament when a Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) from Mid Scotland and Fife hosted a members’ debate on it, and having two MSPs presenting motions based on it. It was also the subject of media attention from Fife Today, the Herald Scotland and DeHavilland (a London-based political intelligence agency). During an interview discussion about the strategic context in which the manifesto originated, FD-2 commented that, “we had learnt our fair share of things about local food systems, and thought it will be a shame not trying to put some of these ideas into, you know, various kind of political actions”. This makes the production of the manifesto seem somewhat incidental to the organisation’s broader strategy, but another comment from the same member of staff suggests otherwise:

“We really need to get politicians interested, and this is the next stage in these five years of work, you know. It’s not all about eating together or growing food together. We really need help to, you know, make some political changes that enable us to continue doing what we do.” (FD-2)

8.1.1.4 Regime reform

In June 2013, Fife Council announced that it will be working in a partnership with the FD and the Soil Association Scotland to pilot, for one year, the Food for Life Catering Mark Gold standard (an assurance scheme for public sector catering developed by the Soil Association) in a selection of primary schools within the county. The FD's role will be to ensure that participating schools source as much produce as possible from within Fife and locally-based producers. This will entail connecting the local supply base with the new centres of demand and looking to fill any gaps in local provision. In addition to changes to school food recipes, some of the wider implications of obtaining the Gold Award include introducing food-related topics and cooking skills into the school curriculum, growing food on school grounds, and making changes to the format of meal times (e.g. introducing school breakfast offerings and teachers eating with pupils). Hence, the changes affect wider systems of practices than those directly related to catering.

In carrying out this activity, the FD goes beyond the scope of grassroots innovation or niche development, as it involves working firmly within the context of incumbent systems, rather than developing alternative configurations within niche spaces. However, neither is the catering mark pilot project tantamount to normative contestation, as it goes beyond merely generating pressure on incumbent systems and/or driving change in regime selection criteria. Instead, within the context of this project, the FD will be changing practices within incumbent systems *directly*, with compliance from regime actors (including Fife Council, the local education authority and the schools themselves, as well as local food businesses).

8.1.1.5 Summary

The findings discussed in this section – concerning the roles played by the FD, both concurrently and over time, in transitions to sustainable food systems – are summarised in Figure 22 (at the end of this chapter). Just like Figure 19 in CHAPTER 7, this diagram is adapted from Geels (2002) and does two things. It maps the current activities of the FD onto the MLP to illustrate the roles that the organisation currently plays in transitions, and

it indicates the shifting position of the organisation over time with respect to these roles. For an explanation of the diagram, see CHAPTER 7, section 7.1.1.4.

The diagram and the analysis on which it's based reveal a few things. Firstly, the FD's activities embody multiple roles in the RIT framework. To a much greater degree than T&PH, this shows that the organisation is not strategically specialised in the performance of one role. Rather, the organisation seems to be 'generalist', performing elements of all the roles. Secondly, there have been shifts in emphasis over the relatively short life of the organisation. In the early days, the FD's activities mostly embodied characteristics of the grassroots innovation and normative contestation roles, the earliest initiatives being the 80:20 challenge, the talks, interviews and public relations activities (which were a big part of the early work), the community dining events, the growing trials, and the members' resources. But after being given an injection of funding, the FD moved into more activities that embodied characteristics of the niche development role as well as increasing the range of activities that characterise the normative contestation role. Finally, the FD has very recently begun to work on an initiative that goes beyond these three roles, as it involves directly changing practices within incumbent systems. Furthermore, in discussions about their shifting strategy, FD staff talked about wanting to create a legacy of tangible change through more practical initiatives in the future, and about having more influence over political systems to enable their work. Thus, like T&PH, the relationship of the FD to the four roles in transition has changed emphasis over time and looks as though it might carry on changing in the future.

8.1.2 The linked organisations

My analysis of the extent to which the linked organisations' activities are characteristic of the different roles in transition is summarised in two different formats (see Table 13 and Figure 23 below). These figures are constructed in the same way as the corresponding figures in CHAPTER 7 (section 7.1.2).

Table 13 and Figure 23 reveal that, much like in the case of T&PH, all (bar one) of the organisations in this case embody core characteristics of multiple roles. Only one of the

organisations is strategically specialised such that it engages in activities that characterise just one of the roles in the framework. The other organisations are specialised to differing degrees, although the FD itself is the only organisation that engages in activities that collectively embody core characteristics of all of the roles. Moreover, like in case I, all of the key roles are played by multiple organisations in the network; none of them are played by only one organisation (or none). Again, this means that there is duplication of effort across the network by organisations playing the same roles as each other, and that they collectively have all the roles covered. Also like case I, the niche development role is dominant. However, in this case, the second most dominant role is normative contestation, rather than grassroots innovation. There is also much more activity across the network that corresponds to the regime reform role.

8.2 Relationships

In this section I will first describe the *substantial relationships* (Sayer 1992) that each of the linked organisations have with the FD. I will then briefly comment on the extent to which each of them is *formally related* (Sayer 1992) to the FD through their identifications with a UK food and farming policy/issue field and different social movements.

8.2.1 The organisations in the network

8.2.1.1 Moffat-CAN

M-CAN's relationship with the FD is informal. FD-1 has met M-CAN-1 at sector events – for instance, in 2012 the Fife Diet and M-CAN both won in their different categories (Best Green Campaigner/Activist and Best Community Initiative, respectively) at the Scottish Green Awards, which were held in Edinburgh – and they've shared some ideas at these meetings. M-CAN has also participated as a local organiser in Blasda, the Scotland-wide local food festival that is run by the FD. Moreover, in an interview, FD-1 named M-CAN as the most inspiring project in Scotland, saying of the aquaponics that it's, "really exciting and real innovation – it isn't just about people digging up for a meal, it's about the future – it's really fresh thinking" (FD-1). However, M-CAN-1 did not mention the FD when asked about organisations with which M-CAN has significant relationships. Moreover, beyond

having an informal relationship based on participating in the same events and occasionally sharing ideas and inspiration, the two organisations do not cross paths. Therefore, the extent to which they both derive benefit from the relationship is subtle, and, unsurprisingly, I didn't discover any sources of tension between them.

8.2.1.2 Greener Kirkcaldy

According to FD-1, GK has worked with the FD on a few occasions, during which FD-1 formed the opinion that the GK staff, "have great energy" (FD-1). Most significantly, GK collaborated with the FD and the Beveridge Park Development Group to design and deliver the Kaleyad allotments and community gardens in Kirkcaldy during 2012-13. However, GK has also participated as a local organiser in Blasda, and collaborated on other one-off events led by the FD within the local area of Kirkcaldy. Hence, both organisations have benefited from having each other's input into projects and events that further their respective aims. In terms of the differences between them, which condition the specific roles that they each played in the Kaleyad project, Blasda, and other events on which they've collaborated, FD-1's comment about GK (above) and GK-1's comment about the FD are both illustrative: "[the FD] are a bit more of a campaigning organisation, or a bit more kind of political-- they're a bit more-- I suppose more academic than us, maybe, and they're obviously covering the whole of Fife. But we're, you know, we've got good relationships with them" (GK-1). Whereas GK contributes a local connection, as well as "great energy", for FD-led projects, the FD contributes a more "political" angle to GK's projects and connections to developments across the county. Neither organisation made mention of negative implications of their relationship.

8.2.1.3 Nourish Scotland

The FD is a member of the Nourish Network and was very active in the establishment and support of NS in its early days before receiving funding. Nowadays, the FD continues to have a presence at NS events, including the NS annual conference at which FD-1 usually talks and the FD has an information stall. Furthermore, NS broadcasts information about the FD's own events and developments via the NS e-zine and website. So, in NS's early days, the organisation enjoyed support from the FD – for instance in the running of NS's

inaugural event. However, as NS has become more established, this support is returned as the FD benefits from the promotional opportunities at NS events and through the NS members' network.

But the relationship between the FD and NS not only gives rise to mutual benefit – I also detected a degree of competitiveness and some tension between them, which is linked to the leaders of the two organisations. FD-1 and NS-1 are both public personalities within the food and farming policy arena in Scotland. In interviews they both expressed a mixture of positive and negative opinions about each other's organisations. Though NS was only founded two years after the FD, FD-1 commented that, "Nourish is quite new, it is only a few years old, and it's supposed to be the Network for the local food movement in Scotland, or the sustainable food movement. And it's had quite a few difficulties in getting there". However, FD-1 went on to qualify that NS is nonetheless, "an important network that can grow" (FD-1). NS-1, on the other hand, said that, "what [FD-1]'s done at the Fife Diet is create a high public profile... in terms of column inches I think it's made a splash, but I'm unconvinced that it's made any difference". NS-1 suspects that FD members were already eating a local, low-impact diet before they joined the project, and that the FD has overstated its impact by suggesting otherwise. He mentioned a specific impact report from the FD that was, in his opinion, "very methodologically poor, because it didn't compare what people were doing before joining, and added to that it was self-reported" (NS-1). Commenting more generally about the FD, NS-1 said the following:

"Thinking that having a website makes people lower their carbon footprint from food is false. And I think [FD-1] would agree that the impact on the ground is much slower to generate than the impact in the media... If the ask had been, 'buy a share in the Fife Community Land Trust and help young farmers to grow food for their local communities', people probably would have done that. The only ask was 'buy local food', and in itself it's pretty hard to pull that together and say, 'look what we've achieved'."

NS-1 also admitted that there is a degree of antagonism in the relationship between the two leaders, highlighting another underlying source of conflict, i.e. their different professional backgrounds (NS-1 as a farmer, FD-1 as a full-time campaigner).

“Some of the blocks to working together are about personality as well as structure. Doesn’t help that [FD-1] and I haven’t got a very good relationship – I should probably be a lot bigger about this. But then I run a farm and he works on it full time, so it’s a bit hard for me to find the time to try and build a relationship.”

However, NS-1 also offered a less personal explanation for the tensions:

“I think it’s the case that if you’ve got situations where you’re trying to change things, then you’ll always get high levels of emotional investment and people getting very cross with each other. That’s the nature of these organisations that are trying to make a difference; people get into combat-mode. And if they can’t beat up the people they’re trying to change, they beat up each other instead.”

8.2.1.4 Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming

The relationship between the FD and Sustain is mostly at arms-length and a bit one-sided. For the FD, Sustain’s online resources, publications and events provide points of connection to developments in food and farming across the UK. In the words of FD-1:

“Sustain tends to be the place where we see what is going on in the rest of the UK. They’re good at saying that this seems to work well in London or Brighton or so on, and so they are great at keeping us abreast of what other people are doing, so you’re not just working on your own.”

In interview Sustain-1 reported being unaware of any formal relationships between the two organisations, saying only of the FD that, “they’re lovely” (Sustain-1). Nonetheless, the FD-1 reported that they’ve been involved with one of Sustain’s projects (the Real Bread Campaign), and that they shared ideas with Sustain staff about the policies in the FD’s New Food Manifesto. So, the relationship is of benefit to the FD, in that it enables

the FD to stay abreast of developments in the UK and makes them feel less isolated. On the other hand, Sustain have presumably derived benefit from the FD's involvement in one of their projects and from the exchange of ideas. However, my impression is that, whereas the FD is more-or-less replaceable in the eyes of Sustain, there is no other organisation that plays the same role as Sustain does in the eyes of the FD.

8.2.1.5 WWF-UK

The relationship between the FD and WWF-UK is different to the other relationships accounted for above. Since early 2012, the FD has been working in a formal partnership with WWF-UK to deliver an externally-funded project called the Seed Truck (described in sections 8.1.1.2 and 8.1.1.3). The idea for the project came from the FD, but they needed support from a larger organisation to gain funding. Whereas the core project activities are co-ordinated and carried out by the FD, WWF-UK provides communications, media and administrative support, as well as campaign resources and networks of expertise for the project, and helped with the funding application. Commenting on the thinking behind the project, WWF-UK-1 said that the FD, "have got some of the answers that we haven't got, and they got there several years before us". WWF-UK-1 was very up-beat about the partnership, outlining some of the benefits for WWF-UK in the following two comments:

"I was excited when the Scotland office said the Fife Diet wanted to talk to us, could we support them, how we could do it. It's really good to be involved in something like this, which is a community group, which is doing some of the things we've been preaching about and telling people about... it's going to actually take some of these actions to communities, tell them what food is all about. And we don't have the capacity to do that."

"We're promoting it as a method of good practice, not just in the UK but globally... so we can say, 'look this is happening and it's really, really good.'"

In addition to the obvious points, WWF-UK-1 was also referring to the fact that the FD have taken on some of WWF-UK's campaign ideas and incorporated them into the project

– e.g. their own ‘Live Well’ principles for a healthy, sustainable diet – lending legitimacy to them by ostensibly demonstrating that they can be put into practice.

Table 12. Synergies and tensions between the FD and the organisations in its network.

Org	The FD gains (synergies)	Org gains (synergies)	Tensions
GK	Resources, expertise, a local connection for projects in Kirkcaldy, support for Blasda	Resources, expertise, connections to developments across the county, politicisation	-
M-CAN	Ideas and inspiration, support for Blasda	Ideas and inspiration	-
NS	Promotional opportunities and networking	Support in getting established	Antipathy between the leaders of both orgs
Sustain	Knowledge of developments in the UK and fellowship	Ideas and support for the Real Bread Campaign	-
WWF-UK	Communications, media and administrative support, resources and networks of expertise, access to funding	Ideas and inspiration, links to local communities, credibility for WWF-UK's campaigns, a model of good practice	-

8.2.2 Formal relations

So, what kinds of formal relations (Sayer 1992) exist between the FD and the linked organisations in this case? Well three of them have remits that are defined more-or-less exclusively in relation to the food and farming sector (FD, Sustain and NS), whereas the other three have broader remits, in that they are concerned with environmental and social issues more generally (M-CAN, GK and WWF-UK). In fact, M-CAN has projects on transport, energy, and reuse/recycling of goods, whilst GK has projects on energy and transport, and WWF-UK has projects on transport, energy, housing, finance and education. In terms of finding possible explanations for this, it may be relevant to note that the first three organisations' work is regional to national in scope, whereas the latter three include two organisations that are locally-based and one whose work is international in scope. Thus, perhaps there is something about the food and farming sector that is amenable to influence and interventions at the regional to national scale, and vice-versa. Moreover, the influence of the Climate Challenge Fund as a major donor to the two local organisations can be easily detected in their mission statements, which

refer to carbon reduction as an aim (and this is backed up by comments in interviews). But whatever the motivations are behind their intentions to drive change across sectors, rather than within one sector, the more general finding from this is that some of the organisations in the network of the FD are not discretely concerned with driving change in food systems, but potentially across multiple sectors and regimes simultaneously.

As for their identifications with social movements, whereas the FD and NS talk about being part of local food and sustainable food movements, M-CAN and GK referred to their participation in international/urban community food movements, clearly believing that the FD is a part of this, at the same time as referring to their contributions towards wider environmental movements. WWF-UK also refers to both sustainable food movements and the environment movement in communications on their website.

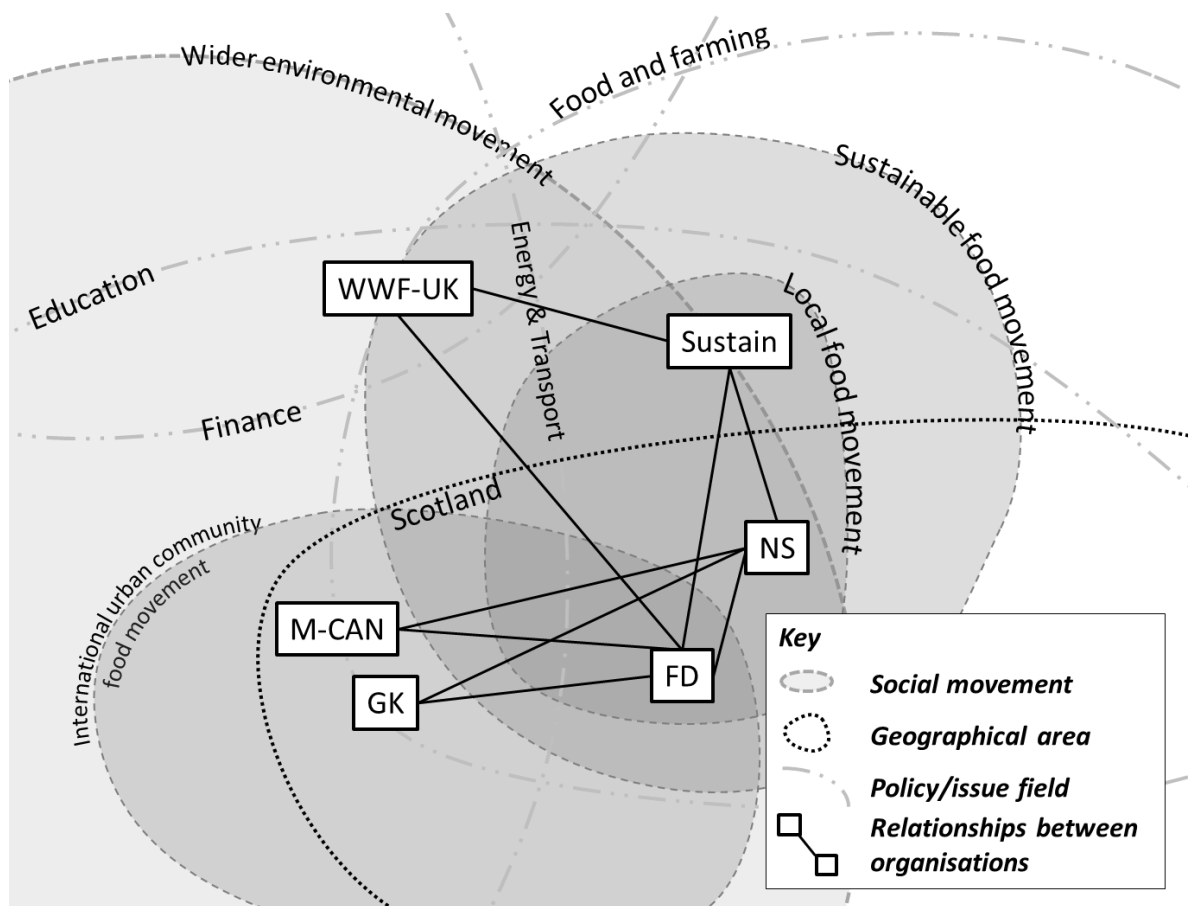


Figure 21. Social worlds/arenas map showing the collective commitments of and relationships between the FD and the organisations in its network.

In Figure 21 (above) I have attempted to represent both the substantial and formal relationships between the organisations in this case using a social worlds/arenas map (Clarke 2005), see CHAPTER 5, section 5.2.1.

8.3 Intentions

Now, in this section, I will seek to provide some provisional answers to the following questions (from CHAPTER 5, section 5.2.2):

1. To what extent do the organisations' intended impacts and the perceived roles that the organisations play in wider change processes – as presented in official documentation and/or espoused by individuals from within the organisations – correspond to the roles in the framework?
2. What degree of similarity/agreement is there amongst (a) the properties that the organisations' associate with sustainable food systems, as presented in official documentation and/or espoused by individuals from within the organisations, and (b) those individuals' espoused theories concerning the most likely drivers of transition towards sustainability?

First I will look at the FD in detail, and then I will look at the linked organisations, providing just a summary of the related findings.

8.3.1 The Fife Diet

Q1: Intended impacts and roles of the organisations

According to the FD's constitution, the organisation's aims and objectives include developing the following outcomes, which can be regarded as intended impacts: 1) "a mass network of people sourcing their food locally in Fife", 2) "collective and participatory approaches to reduce our impact on the wider environment", 3) "a strong community of interest around food and climate change", 4) "a network that boosts the local food economy", 5) "better access to fresh local produce", and 6) "community development and rural regeneration" (Fife Diet 2009). These intended impacts are broad-ranging and

concern a variety of issues, which is reflected in the scope of the different activities that the FD engages in. Talking about this, FD-2 made the following comment: “Our objectives maybe are not as specific [...] as, you know, ‘we are a CSA group and this is what we do’”. On one level, the FD is ‘just’ about helping people in Fife to produce and consume local food, but the motivations and rationale for doing this link to various notions of the public good, including participation, the environment, community, access (equity), development and regeneration. However, they go beyond the theoretical categories used to characterise sustainability transitions.

In terms of the specific contributions that they think they are making towards realising the impacts mentioned above, FD-4 talked about “offering people an opportunity for behavioural change”, and FD-3 talked about “helping people change their communities”. So there is a definite element of enabling wider social change processes. Moreover, FD-2 also emphasised the importance of driving change directly, saying that there was an intention at the FD to try and actually “create an alternative food system or different alternatives in plural”. Hence, two strategic aims were expressed: 1) to enable behaviour change for individuals and communities, and 2) to create alternative systems. On a slightly different tack, in a discussion about how the FD relates to wider societal change processes, FD-1 said that the organisation is currently focussing on “trying to build up a local infrastructure that we can attach to when things start to crumble”. This statement seems to be underlain by an assumption that incumbent systems are more likely to fail in the face of external pressures, rather than be re-oriented. However, FD-1 also talked about working in solidarity with a wider movement of people to influence those pressures (i.e. climate change) directly. In the words of FD-1, “this [the FD] could be part of a coordinated action that people were doing all over the place so we could see some real impact on low carbon” (FD-1).

Moreover, FD-1 claims that the FD’s wider goal is “to change the system and introduce the idea of food sovereignty to-- not just to Fife, but to the Scottish public”. So although the FD’s initial and primary concern has been to deliver change within Fife, the organisation’s ambitions have expanded to include “an increasing wider mass movement of people” (FD-

2) across the rest of Scotland. Furthermore, the concept of food sovereignty – which was the topic of the FD’s first international event and which FD key actors brought up in interviews – links the organisation to an international movement of other groups that share similar concerns. This sense of connection is particularly important to FD-1 who has often been eager to defend against being perceived as inward when giving media interviews. In an interview with me FD-1 explained that, from the beginning, the FD was about “putting local food in an international context, so it was not about retreating to localism or putting the barriers up, this was about solidarity and common justice and about people in Africa who are dealing with Climate Change now” (FD-1).

Q2: Ends and means

When asked in interview about the properties that they associated with sustainable food systems – i.e. the desired ‘ends’ of a transition to sustainability – individuals from the FD presented a variety of different views. I have clustered these into the following themes, though there is some disparity within the clusters. Hence, according to them, a sustainable food system would be/have: local-to-regional organisation; global solidarity; health-giving; co-operative/mutualistic; based on natural systems; biodiverse and animal-friendly. As well as highlighting some of the core values that underpin the motivations of the different individuals, this is also evidence of the fact that the desired ‘ends’ of a transition to sustainability are not fixed or necessarily consensual. Moreover, neither are their theories about how change might come about (which might be interpreted in terms of the likely ‘means’ of a transition using theoretical categories). FD key actors expressed a few different opinions about the most likely key drivers of change, including fuel prices and government intervention. However, civil society innovation, activism and mass public engagement were overwhelmingly seen as offering a means of change. Under one view, this is borne out of a lack of alternatives:

“I think it is up to civil society and other groups and movements to come up with ideas because I think that the politicians are living in a very fast moving, complex

and uncertain world and not really equipped to provide real leadership. So we need to go on locally working with our own models” (FD-1)

But under another view, community initiatives are intrinsically the bearers of change:

“The more powerful change [...] it’s going to come from community initiatives organising themselves [...] tying in with the community projects of, you know, green or interested people growing better food, and putting these into alternative systems that really represent an alternative to the dominant model. And that’s how a system changes and that is how they have changed through the years.” (FD-2)

And under a third view, there is a sense of inevitability about change being driven by projects like the FD – though it is recognised that this relies on people getting involved and it becoming mainstream:

“Oh it’s going to take time, it’s going to take people just getting involved and becoming more aware and I think definitely projects like ours shouting a bit more. But it’s got to be mainstream.” (FD-4)

Overall, this confidence in the capacity of civil society innovation, activism and mass public engagement to drive change corresponds with the intended impacts, strategic aims and activities of the FD. FD key actors believe in the capacity of groups like theirs driving change, and so they are committed to delivering that change. However, they are pluralistic about the specific contributions that they hope to make through their work. They hope to enable change in others, as well as directly delivering change themselves. They are making efforts to influence external pressures by reducing the carbon emissions that they generate through consuming food using whatever means are currently available, whilst simultaneously engaging in attempts to build up more radically sustainable alternative food systems. Moreover, the very change that they seek to bring about – the desired ends of a transition – is open and contestable, being underpinned by various different values and motivations. But one thing clearly gave their visions strength – the

idea of being connected to an international mass movement of people and organisations working together.

Thus, thinking about the four roles in the RIT framework, it seems that the intentions of FD key actors do not neatly correspond to one single role. There is clearly a strong sense of the grassroots innovation role contained in the notion of directly creating alternative systems, whether the fate of such systems will be to generate significant collective impacts in solidarity with the efforts of other change-makers elsewhere, or to wait in the wings until the incumbent regime fails. There is also a sense that the FD plays the niche development role, insofar as it enables others to change. However, this was not articulated in terms of facilitating the learning and capacity-building around grassroots innovations (part of the definition of that role), but was primarily about enabling people and communities to change. As for the other role, normative contestation, I have not found compelling evidence to suggest that any of the FD staff members really see it as part of the organisation's purpose.

8.3.2 The linked organisations

In Table 14 (at the end of the chapter) I have summarised my findings about the stated intentions of the five linked organisations. In the rest of this section I will briefly discuss them.

Q1: Intended impacts and roles of the organisations

This point having been made, it is also true that, all-bar-one, they do see themselves as playing roles within broad change processes occurring within food systems in particular (GK being the only exception). Moreover, the roles that they see themselves playing and the impacts they wish to generate – irrespective of the sector, system or regime that they relate their work to – correspond somewhat to their scale of operations and, to a degree, they correspond to the framework. Whereas the two locally-based organisations see themselves as part of wider movements, the two regional (Scottish) organisations see themselves as builders of movements; the one national (UK-based) organisation sees itself

as a builder of coalitions of concern across the sector; and the only international organisation sees itself as a broker of relations between stakeholders from all sectors. So unsurprisingly, perhaps, there seems to be a scaling of intended impacts and perceived roles, on the one hand, and scales of engagement on the other, i.e. from movement participants (local scale), through movement builders (regional scale), to coalition builders (national scale) and multi-sectoral relationship brokers (international scale).

But whether and how this corresponds to the roles in the framework is more a matter of interpretation rather than description. To offer such an interpretation, the two organisations that are intent on being part of wider movements could be said to be the grassroots innovators – simply engaged in alternative practices at the local level that respond to wider issues. The two organisations that are intent on building movements could be said to be the strategic niche managers – engaged in facilitating the replication and up-scaling of alternative practices. The organisation that is intent on building coalitions of concern could be said to be the normative contestator – engaged in attempts to increase pressure on the public and private sectors so that they change their policies and practices. And finally, the organisation that is intent on being a broker of relations between all stakeholders could be said to be the ‘reformer’ – engaged in attempts to negotiate with regime actors and encourage them to embed alternative practices within existing systems.

Q2: Ends and means

But to run with this interpretation might risk implying that the different organisations have a coherent and shared notion of what the means and ends of a transition to sustainability in food systems might look like. Actually, in this case, it seems that there is a large degree of overlap between the properties that key actors from the different organisations associate with sustainable food systems (the ‘ends’). All-but-one explicitly mentioned the local scale (i.e. of organisation) as an important property, and health, equity, and a sense of community involvement or mutuality were all common themes, whilst aspects of environmental protection and enhancement appeared in most. But on

the subject of ‘means’, there was considerable divergence of opinion (though less so than between organisations in the T&PH network). The most commonly-cited drivers concerned the following agencies: (1) government intervention/policy change, followed by (2) stress and shocks to the system, and (3) grassroots action and innovation. The only other view presented was that change will be driven by (4) co-ordinated action on multiple levels with multiple tactics.

In summary, these are the main findings that have emerged from the above discussion. The intentions of different FD key actors do, to some extent, characterise the grassroots innovation role (in the notion of directly creating alternative systems) and the niche development role (in the notions of enabling people and communities to change, and building a movement). However, the change that they seek to bring about through their work – the desired ends of a transition – is underpinned by various different values and motivations. Moreover, amongst the organisations in the network of the FD not all are concerned with driving change in food systems specifically; some are concerned with driving change across multiple sectors and regimes simultaneously. Nonetheless, they seem to agree to a significant extent about the desired ‘ends’ of a transition.

What’s more, there seems to be a scaling of intended impacts and roles in transition across the network, from the two grassroots innovators working at the local level, to the two strategic niche managers at the regional level, then a normative contestator at the national level and possibly a regime reformer working at the international level. And finally, the most common opinions amongst key actors from all the organisations in the network regarding the likely future drivers of a transition to sustainability concerned developments at regime and landscape level, i.e. government intervention and stress and shocks to the system. Unlike the others, FD key actors had confidence in the capacity of civil society innovation, activism and mass public engagement to drive change.

--

Having considered, during the course of this chapter, the extent to which the activities of the various organisations’ in this case are characteristic of the four roles in the RIT

framework (section 8.1), presented my observations about the substantial and formal relationships between them (section 8.2), and explored the intentions behind their activities (section 8.3), I will now move on to the next and final case study.

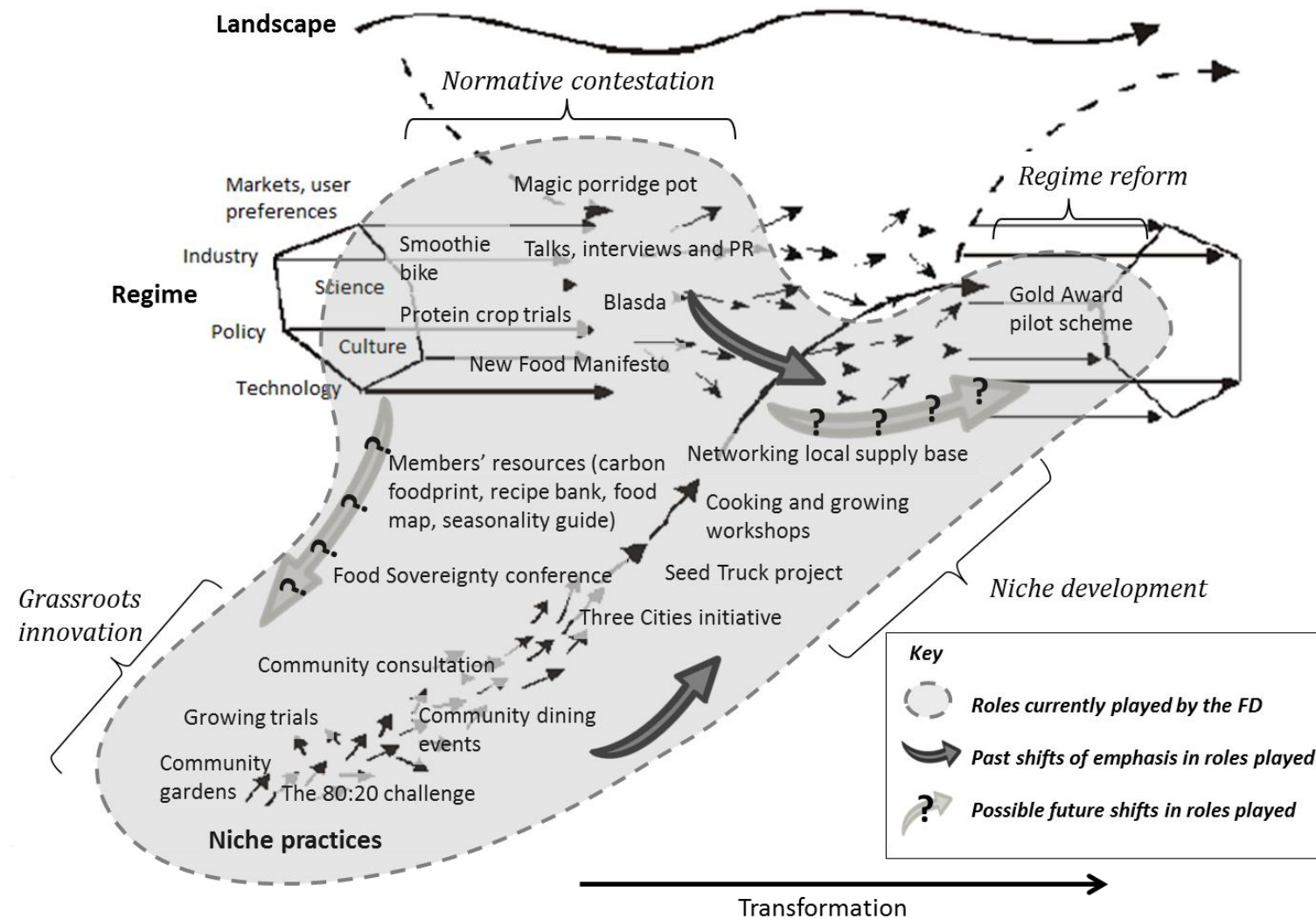


Figure 22. 'Map' of the roles currently played by the FD in transitions (text within shaded area), and the shifting positions adopted by the organisation over time, with respect to these roles (shaded arrows). Diagram adapted from Geels (2002).

Table 13. Activities carried out by the organisations under the headings of the four roles in transition.

CSO/Role	Grassroots innovation	Niche development	Normative contestation	Regime reform
FD	Community dining events Community gardens and allotments The 80:20 challenge Community consultation Growing trials	Online resources Networking local supply base Cooking and growing w/shops Food Sovereignty conference Three Cities initiative Seed Truck project	'Blasda' Smoothie bike Magic porridge pot Talks, interviews and PR New Food Manifesto	Gold Award pilot scheme
M-CAN	Aquaponics unit Community garden and allotments Food waste collection			
GK	Community garden, allotments and orchard	Guidance and technical assistance Food growing and cooking courses	Promotional events -	
NS		Research into best practices Online networking platform Network-building events Edible Edinburgh network E-zine	Responses to Government consultations Policy platform for members -	
Sustain		Network-building Convening and facilitating sub-alliances Research and dissemination Guidance and technical assistance Knowledge transfer	Lobbying for legislative change Provision of evidence for policy making Championing 'good' businesses Naming and shaming 'bad' biz Educational campaigns Influencing public debates	Co-development of sustainable food procurement rules (e.g. London Olympics in 2012)
WWF-UK		Research into best (and worst) practices Supporting funding bids Expertise and advice	Lobbying for legislative change Provision of evidence for policy Championing best practice Educational campaigns Influencing public debates	Convening multi-stakeholder platforms to drive dissemination of alternative criteria beyond the UK

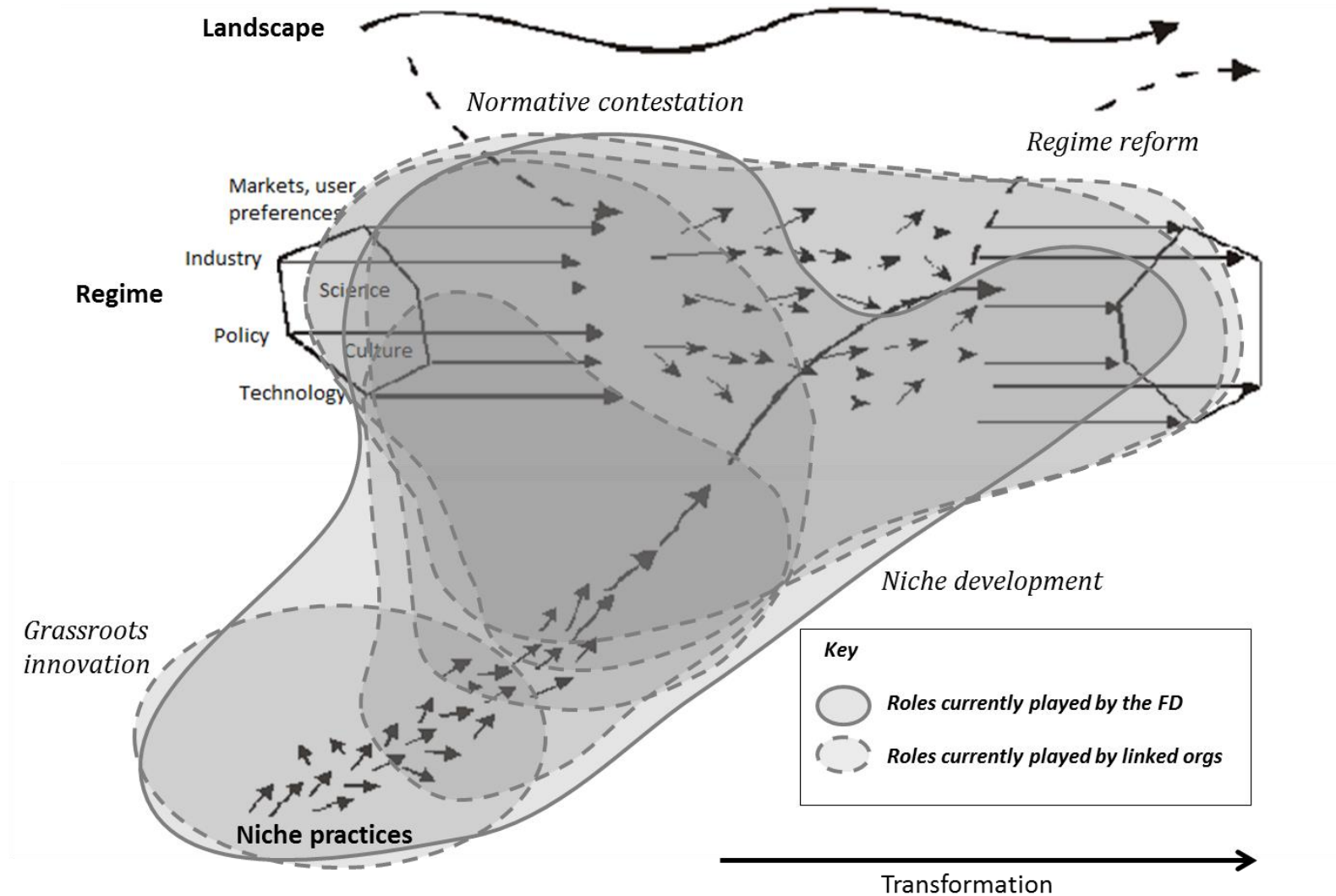


Figure 23. 'Map' of the roles currently played in transitions by the FD (shaded area with solid outline) and five other CSOs that it works in association with (shaded areas with broken outlines). Diagram adapted from Geels (2002).

Table 14. Intended impacts of the six organisations and related views held by some of their members.

CSO/ Intentions	Intended impacts of the organisation	Visions of the future and perceived roles of the organisation	Key properties associated with sustainable food systems	Theory of change (key drivers of a transition to sustainability)
M-CAN	Reduce carbon emissions and improve people's health in Moffat	M-CAN is part of an international urban community food movement	Labour intensive Community-connected Small/local scale Minimal negative externalities	Uncertain – possibly local grassroots action
GK	Environmental protection and carbon reduction in Kirkcaldy	GK is seeking a more sustainable future through practical action and is part of a wider environmental movement	Local/small scale Civic involvement	Government intervention to regulate supermarkets
FD	Build a powerful local food movement Enable behaviour change for individuals and communities Create alternative food systems	The FD could be part of a globally co-ordinated, low carbon food system Local food systems can take over when the current system fails	Local-to-regional organisation Global solidarity Health-giving Co-operative/mutualistic Based on natural systems Biodiverse and animal-friendly	Civil society innovation, activism and mass public engagement Stress and shocks to the system Government intervention
NS	Enable shared action to change what we eat, how we farm, local food economies and policy	NS is building a movement to create a sustainable food system for Scotland	Locally-based and seasonal Resilience Equity Low carbon	Co-ordinated action on multiple levels with multiple tactics
Sustain	Persuade the public and private sectors to change their food and farming policies so that they support sustainable development	Sustain will generate pressure on the public and private sectors until we have a sustainable food system Sustain works in an opportunistic way, pulling together coalitions of concern at specific moments	Minimal negative externalities Locally-based and seasonal Health-giving Equity/mutuality Diversity	Local, grassroots action and empowerment combined with system-level change in policies

WWF-UK	Create long-term solutions to global threats to people and nature	Smallholder agriculture and changed consumption patterns are the top solutions for a more equitable world and a more environmentally friendly system WWF's role in bringing this about is as an honest broker to all stakeholders	Minimal negative externalities Health-giving/healthy food culture Diversity Consciousness Equity Global and seasonal	Stress and shocks to the system Government intervention – though it probably won't happen
---------------	---	---	---	--

CHAPTER 9. The Soil Association

The rest of this chapter is organised in the same way as the previous two chapters, i.e. into three sections: 9.1 Activities, 9.2 Relationships, and 9.3 Intentions.

9.1 Activities

The SA was selected as the focal organisation in this case because it appeared, from initial research, to enact the roles of normative contestation and regime reform. In this section I will test this assumption, by exploring the extent to which the SA's activities are characteristic of this and the other roles in the RIT framework (section 9.1.1). In addition, I will consider the extent to which the linked organisations' activities are characteristic of the different roles in transition (section 9.1.2). The core characteristics of each role were first defined in CHAPTER 4.

9.1.1 The Soil Association

9.1.1.1 Grassroots innovation

For a number of years after the SA was founded (1946) its main purpose was to establish a scientifically evidenced case for the enhanced health-giving properties of organically produced foods and improved soil fertility of organic farmland, in comparison to the prevailing norm of input-intensive industrial agriculture and its products (see CHAPTER 2, section 2.1.1). In the words of Organic movement historian, Philip Conford, and ex-Soil Association boss, Patrick Holden, "the Soil Association was going completely against the trend of post-war agricultural and medical policy" (Conford and Holden 2007: 190). As such, most of the resources of the organisation were invested into establishing and running an experiment to compare organic and non-organic farming practices, known colloquially as the 'Haughley Experiment' (Gill 2010). During this time the SA played a direct and influential role in the creation of an alternative system of food provision that was based on novel cognitive, technical and social practices, i.e. organic agriculture (Smith 2006).

Nevertheless, despite the fact that the SA still has close links with organic producers through SA-CERT and the land trust since the end of the Haughley Experiment in 1969 the SA has had no direct involvement in food provision and therefore cannot be said to currently enact grassroots innovation (see Table 8, CHAPTER 5, for definitions of the four roles).

9.1.1.2 Niche development

Developing an organic food niche has been a major strategic focus of the SA since at least the 1970s, under a new generation of enthusiasts (Conford and Holden 2007). During this 'second era', the SA enacted the niche development role by networking smallholders across the country; developing standards (after 1973) to protect growing markets from rogue traders; disseminating organic best practice; and building supply networks and increasing retail capacity by supporting new whole food outlets (Smith 2006, Conford and Holden 2007). By the 1980's, the wider organic movement had transformed and the SA was joined by an increasing number of other 'organic' organisations, including Elm Farm, Henry Doubleday Research Association (now Garden Organic), the Organic Growers Association, and British Organic Farmers, some developing alternative organic standards.

Today, the SA is engaged in a range of activities that support niche development, both through the advancement of organic standards and by building the capacity required to deliver them (i.e. in terms of knowledge, institutional and physical infrastructures, skills and capabilities within the sector). Internally, this is divided between two main strands of work, the producer support strand that focusses on developing production systems and standards, and the local food strand, where the focus is on developing routes to market. The SA also provides training programmes and licenses its own standard, which collectively underpin these activities. As I will go on to show, these areas of work embody the characteristics of aggregation, co-ordination, infrastructure creation and brokering.

Aggregation

For the past 15 or so years the SA has been home to a dedicated local food team that has supported the development of alternative models for getting organic produce to market –

including, *inter alia*, box schemes, farmers markets, CSA schemes and organic buying groups (OBGs). According to SA-2 this area of work is about creating a space and “seeing what the community grassroots initiatives that we could back in the future are” (SA-2). To this end, they have researched, written and produced a range of resources for community groups, which aggregate learning from a large number of projects that the SA has worked with over the years, as well as academics and industry advisers (Soil Association 2013f, Soil Association 2013g).

For instance, on the topic of CSA the SA has produced the following: an updateable, interactive digital map and database enabling people to find and learn about the growing number of CSA schemes in the UK; 21 written case studies of CSAs (seven of which have been made into short films); a “comprehensive” action manual about setting up and running CSAs, which is now in its second edition; a separate marketing guide for CSAs; an evaluation report that examines the impact of CSA; the degree-level teaching programme on the theory and practice of CSA mentioned in 0; and several other older reports and guides that have now been superseded by the aforementioned items.

In addition to this, the SA has produced a similar – though slightly smaller – range of resources about OBGs as well as some generic resources, such as their toolkit on organisational structures for community food enterprises. Whereas their work on CSA has largely been UK-focussed, the work on OBGs has looked further afield for case studies:

“We did two case studies, one on BIO-COOP in France and one on GAS [I Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale] in Italy. So they’re on the Soil Association website. And really what we’ve been trying to do [...] is to say look, these are some case studies, these are some key characteristics. What can we learn in the U.K.; how could they be transferred?” (SA-7)

All of these resources are based on research carried out by or for the SA that aggregates lessons from individual projects so as to generate niche-level learning.

Co-ordination

The SA provides what it calls ‘producer support’, both to its organic licensees and non-organic producers, in return for an annual fee (Soil Association 2013b). In practice, producer support provides a range of services, including a telephone helpline; technical documents, guides, and market information; subscription to ‘Organic Farming’ magazine and an e-news bulletin; invitations to training and events; and reduced rates for agricultural extension services. All these services are provided by a dedicated team which sits within the charity. In terms of the niche development role, producer support frames and co-ordinates the practices of producers to align them with the SA’s standards of organic practice. By acting as the main conduit of information and expertise to producers that subscribe to the services, the SA exerts a structuring influence over their activities and decisions.

Likewise, the local food team works with community food enterprises in ways that embody this characteristic. In addition to providing digital and printed resources about CSAs and OBGs, the team provides other kinds of guidance for groups pioneering these approaches. For instance, the team has actively engaged with specific groups, offering technical training through workshops, one-to-one study visits, and on-going mentoring. Through this hands-on work the team is able to shape and steer developments on the ground. Tamar Grow Local, for example, is one group that the local food team has worked more closely with, by helping them to incorporate as a co-operative and set themselves up to support, in turn, a number of smaller OBGs and CSAs in the local area.

Moreover, the SA currently runs training schemes that focus on developing the knowledge and capabilities of organic growers. Through these schemes, the SA is able to frame and co-ordinate the next steps in their graduates’ careers, including how they manage the farms and gardens that they go on to own and/or be employed by. For example, the SA runs an apprenticeship scheme (Future Growers), the “key aim” of which is to “train up the next generation of farmers and growers”, because, as the SA sees it, “the sort of mainstream educational training route is just not equipping the industry with organic

growers” (SA-8). The SA’s role in the scheme is twofold. On the one hand the SA, “acts as a facilitator and broker to find organic farms or growers that are looking to, and can afford to, take somebody on for two years as a paid member of staff” (SA-8). And on the other, the SA runs an educational programme through a series of seminars, study visits, attendance at events and conferences, structured study resources, and free subscription to the producer support magazine. The SA also provides on-going support for three years after graduation, in the form of career advice and guidance with regard to accessing land.

In addition, SAS has a programme called ‘Crofting Connections’ which aims to nurture knowledge and skills in the crofting sector in the Scottish Highlands and Islands. The programme provides information and training for crofters to help them farm in a way that is financially sustainable, “eco-friendly” and ideally, but not necessarily, organic (SA-5).

Infrastructure creation

Both the producer support and local food strands create networks and institutional infrastructures that span multiple local milieus. For instance, in September 2011 the local food team ran the first national conference on CSA called ‘Farming together: The future of CSA in the UK’. Moreover, at the 2013 national conference, the SA and various partners launched a new national network (CSA UK Network), which is a legally constituted organisation, independent from the SA. Talking about the local food team’s events for CSAs and OGBs, SA-7 highlighted the importance of creating networks:

“One of the biggest parts is just the networking where people can come along, see that they’ve become part of a bigger movement, find somewhere where they can get some information, and then meet other people who are doing the same things.” (SA-7)

Two other initiatives within the SA could be considered to embody this characteristic of creating networks and infrastructures, though in quite different ways. First, by licensing their organic standard, SA-CERT provides an institutional infrastructure that allows organic farmers access to premium prices from a specialist market. It does this by creating a

traceable link through certified food supply chains and passing information about the standards of production from field to shop floor, connecting producers and consumers through a knowledge relation.

Second, the SA's land trust – which was set up “to safeguard organic farmland” from being taken out of organic management – provides an institutional infrastructure through which farmland can be passed on and kept within the organic niche⁵⁷. It does this by acquiring land through bequests and donations, managing the land and buildings, and renting them out to organic farmers at sub-market prices. Practical outcomes of this set-up include increased availability of land for organic farmers, better distribution of the financial risk associated with land ownership (i.e. spread across the SA's estate, rather than landing only on the individual farmer), and prevention of soil fertility loss that could arise from conversion back to conventional cultivation. SA-8 explained the last point:

“One of the reasons that this is so important in organic is because somebody could be spending 10, 20, 30 years building up the fertility of the soil, so the soil being the most important thing [...] and, you know, the concept is that that has to be – that should be preserved because, you know, you could just like wipe all of that out in one fell swoop by spraying chemicals on it” (SA-8)

Brokering

The SA has become increasingly involved in the management of partnerships between grassroots and regime actors in recent times. Through SA-CERT, for instance, the SA engages with a cross-section of regime actors including supermarkets, independent and online retailers, and “the vast majority of the UK certification bodies” (most of which are conventional for-profit businesses), as well as niche actors such as organic farms shops and box schemes, in order to create favourable terms and broker deals for organic

⁵⁷ Since it was only recently established (in 2007), the land trust currently comprises just four farms, totalling 374 acres. However, a further three sites, totalling 2690 acres, are pledged to the trust in the form of bequests, but have not yet been handed over.

producers. However, the brokering of relationships between the organic niche and regime actors has been a feature of their approach for much longer.

Since its founding, the SA has struggled to strike a balance between generating an internally coherent organic practice that expresses the values of the organic movement, and encouraging movement ‘outsiders’ to become involved in organic developments. At the current time this tension is embodied in changes to the producer support function, which was traditionally targeted at organic licensees only but is increasingly being made available to non-organic farmers. According to SA-5, this change is about trying to “drive and disseminate organic innovation” (SA-1) beyond the boundaries of organic practice, and to be part of a “broader coalition” (SA-2) around “wider sustainability issues” (ibid.). SA Chief Executive, Helen Browning, emphasised this in her opening address to the SA’s annual conference in 2012, saying that in order to solve the technical issues facing organic farmers, such as low yields in wheat and pest problems in fruit production, the SA needs to work with others outside the organic movement who are seeking solutions to the same problems (Browning 2012).

This strategy to engage outsiders is backed up by a programme of innovation that has two main aspects (Soil Association 2013c). Firstly, the Duchy Originals Future Farming Programme⁵⁸ (Soil Association 2013d) works by (1) running on-farm field labs that bring organic and non-organic producers together to share knowledge and highlight areas of practice where experimental trials and/product development are needed, (2) providing co-ordination, funding, technical expertise and infrastructure for delivering the trials and product development, and (3) feeding back the lessons learned into the SA’s standards. Secondly, there is the Low Carbon Farming Programme, which brings together organic and non-organic farmers and scientists to identify ways to reduce their GHG emissions (Soil Association 2013e). The programme has produced a range of resources for producers including a handbook, a mobile app, an assessment tool, a set of six case studies, and two short films. Like the Future Farming Programme, this programme also feeds transferable

⁵⁸ The programme is funded by the Prince of Wales’s Charitable Foundation and delivered by the Soil Association in association with partners The Organic Research Centre and Duchy Originals from Waitrose.

knowledge back into the SA, driving innovation within organic practice. By way of explaining the impetus behind the Low Carbon Farming Programme, SA-1 commented:

“For example, a guy called Tolly has a zero carbon farm, he thinks. But embedded carbon is not part of the current organic standards framework. So one of the things we want to do is drive innovation within organic practice itself, but also in the wider community that exists of amazing pioneers in the movement who are doing incredible things around wider sustainability issues, around practice in agriculture”
(SA-1)

The SA also engages in brokering with regime actors through a project called ‘Land Partnerships’. In this project, the SA has made a case study of their own approach to “unlocking land” (i.e. through the land trust’s mechanism described above) so as to encourage other, more mainstream organisations to follow suit. Moreover, collaborating with these organisations has positive side-effects, such as providing access to expertise:

“I’ve been working with a group called the Land Partnerships [...] that pulled together a whole load of quite mainstream land and farming organisations who are looking at unlocking land. And through that we brought a land agent and public surveyor, who previously worked for the National Trust, onto our board of trustees.” (SA-8)

In terms of future directions for the SA’s role in niche development overall, SA-7 described the current time as a “transition phase”. Specifically, she explained that the priority and relevance of the work with community food enterprises is changing, due to a perceived need for “focussing the smaller resources” (SA-7) that are available post-Big Lottery (see CHAPTER 2, section 2.2.1), and a change in the perceived value of bottom-up change within the SA. This was echoed by SA-2:

“What do you do around the equity agenda when you are supporting grassroots change that relies on the market for its vehicle for change? So there is this grassroots change, absolutely gorgeous, everybody loves grassroots change; but

look at the people who are impacted by the work. They are small numbers and their reach isn't broad, so you have that dilemma about that work" (SA-2)

Hence, the SA recently set up the Sustainable Food Cities (SFC) Network (Soil Association 2013h), which targets community food enterprises by combining all the characteristics of niche development in one project. The SFC network brings together public bodies, private companies and CSOs from UK cities (*brokering*), with the aim of helping to "share challenges, explore practical solutions and develop best practice in all aspects of sustainable food" (Sustainable Food Cities 2013a) (*aggregation* and *co-ordination*). The main vehicles for this are an online portal and annual conferences (*infrastructure creation*). Key priorities are to ensure that the cities in the network go through the following steps (*co-ordination* and *brokering*): (1) establishing a cross-sector governance body, (2) creating a vision, strategy and action plan for the city, (3) incorporating healthy and sustainable food into all relevant policies and strategies; and (4) developing a rolling public engagement programme that keeps people interested (Sustainable Food Cities 2013b). In 2013 25 cities were already enrolled, but the network aims to enrol a further 75 over the initial three years of funding (i.e. between 2013 and 2016).

So, following on from the comments above, perhaps the "transition phase" is about the SA having refined its approach to niche development, such that it can now enact this role more efficiently and effectively than it did in the past.

9.1.1.3 Normative contestation

Looking back to the SA's past, another change in strategy took hold from the mid-1980s into the 2000s, during which time the SA became increasingly outward-facing, after a long period of insular development. The succession of food scares (CHAPTER 2, section 2.1.1) provided opportunities for the SA to openly criticise incumbent policy and industry practices on normative grounds and strengthened its arguments in favour of organic food. Later on, public debates around genetic modification, biodiversity loss and climate change provided further opportunities for positioning organic systems as greener and healthier than conventional systems. As its public membership grew, the SA focussed its

communications on these issues and, as a result, they became more widely recognised and trusted as a brand. At the same time, the SA started developing relationships with the multiple retailers so that they could make organic food available to a wider swathe of the population – an aim that they were largely successful in achieving (Conford and Holden 2007). Thus, by enacting normative contestation, the SA opened up new possibilities for mainstreaming organic systems in the future.

At the current time, the SA still enacts this role through various activities which I will now discuss with reference to the characteristics of the role, i.e. legitimisation, campaigning and lobbying.

Legitimation

The identification and development of messages that either legitimise organic practices or de-legitimise non-organic practices is an on-going concern for the SA today. Despite the SA's success in creating a viable market niche (the value of the UK market for organic foods grew tenfold from 1995 to 2007, see CHAPTER 2, section 2.2.3), organic food is still not mainstream and retains an “elitist image” (SA-6) that is considered to be a major barrier to further market growth (SA-2). In the words of SA-5:

“Some people think that the Soil Association is too wound up in organic food [...] so I think that everything we are doing is a strategy of helping to dispel that, and I think that we will overcome that through time and through work” (SA-5)

Two of the top concerns for the SA currently are to (1) “forge a story around social justice” (SA-6), and (2) stop “reinforcing the idea of a club” (SA-2). Hence, SA staff talked in interview about their strategic aim of “normalising organic” (SA-2), citing the notion of ‘entitlement’ as an example of the kind of discourse that they are using in public debate to this end. For instance, in the context of school food reform, their goal is to create a situation in which “organic is part of the entitlement criteria that they give at school as their kids needing the best” (SA-2). This strategy is applied in the SA's Food for Life

Partnership (FFLP), which will be discussed further below. Talking about the messaging that the SA has developed for use within the context of the FFLP, SA-2 said the following:

“Very rarely is it about, ‘you should change your diet because it’s good for you’, or, ‘you should change this food because it’s more sustainable’. It’s more about, ‘what are the other things we can tell people that will encourage them to change their behaviour?’ Sometimes it’s about their kids doing better at school, or them wanting better for their kids, for themselves.” (SA-2)

Indeed, other staff talked about the FFLP having the potential to make organic food “a lot more relevant and increasingly mainstream” (SA-5), and to move it “from the odd posh matters on the fringe into being something everyone should see as part of life” (SA-4). Nonetheless, given that redefining the entitlement criteria for a nation of parents and teachers is an ambitious aim, the SA recognises the importance of working with others to achieve it. Thus, the SA view the FFLP – which is a collaboration between the SA and four other CSOs including Garden Organic, the linked organisation – as an “access brand” (SA-2) that enables the SA to access a wider audience. Commenting on this, SA-6 explained that “getting other people and other organisations to amplify your messages is nearly always a [...] really, really, kind of powerful important thing” (SA-6). In the words of SA-2:

“Ordinarily you are looking at other people to be leaders of change for you. You are looking to people to be amplifiers or blunderbuss carriers, or whatever [...] those people in civil society who can carry messages [...] We were really lucky to have some people involved in Food for Life who – people like Jeanette Orrey – who really was obviously talking up the value of putting the kids first and things like that, and who was a school cook and had real authenticity” (SA-2)

In interviews, SA staff also talked about the important role of science in their strategy. According to the SA-4, “efforts [within the SA] to produce information about the benefits of organic” in the 1980s and 90s, drew on “very little bits of science that were done, and slightly amateur trials and personal experiences” (SA-4). This, SA staff believe, has left the

SA with an anti-science image (SA-2, SA-4, SA-6). For this reason, SA-2 talked about a “real need for us to move away from that sort of Luddite language”, and to “pitch ourselves as people with solutions rather than religious zealots” (ibid.). Moreover, SA-6 explained that:

“The current directorate's approach is very much around a kind of a metaphorically 'big tent' politics; around being a bit less, you know, pronouncing from the mountain tops and saying we've got all of the answers, and being a bit more research-led, for example. So building up a stronger coalition of scientists and academics to support our work.” (SA-6)

In summary, the SA's attempts to reinforce their claims about organic and sustainable food are currently based on two key messages that draw on socially-determined criteria of legitimacy. First, organic food is framed as being both “normal” and “the best”, i.e. something that everyone should be entitled to. Second, the SA seeks to frame itself as being led by science. Additionally, the SA uses other organisations and individuals to gain access to new audiences so that these messages travel as far and wide as possible.

Campaigning

Turning next to ‘campaigning’, this characteristic is embodied in the current activities of the SA in various formats. According to SA-6, the SA has “different campaigns for different purposes”. Specifically, there are three distinct audiences for SA campaigns and two different styles of campaigning.

First, in terms of audience, there are campaigns targeted at the existing membership and supporter base, the purpose of which is to mobilise their participation and deepen their engagement. The Keep Britain Buzzing campaign, which asks existing members to plant bee-friendly wildflowers and sign a petition calling for a ban on neonicotinoid pesticides in the EU, is an example of this kind of campaign. Second, there are campaigns targeted at the “broader public beyond the membership” (SA-6), the purposes of which are “consciousness raising” (ibid.) around particular issues and “changing consumer behaviour” (ibid.). A recent campaign of this sort is the aptly named ‘Cottoned On’

campaign, which promotes the benefits of buying clothes made from organic cotton and bears the tagline, 'Have you cottoned on yet?'. Third, there are campaigns which aim specifically at "changing government policy" (SA-6). In practice, these kinds of campaigns are often about "trying to create an atmosphere of outrage that governments have to respond to" (SA-6).

In terms of the style of campaigning, SA-6 explained that there are "reactive, quick things like Not In My Banger" (NIMB), which was "a situation that arose which we took advantage of as much as anything else" (SA-6). But there are also slow-burners: campaigns, like the FFLP, that "evolve into programmes" (SA-6).

Talking about the reactive style of campaigning, SA-6 explained that:

"One that always gets our embers going is anything around GM [...] often coat-tailing on a kind of food scare has been quite effective [...] the organic market has tended to expand reactively and our campaigns have tended to be successful reactively, around kind of the huge health scares and things like that." (SA-6)

However, for SA-6, "one of our most successful campaigns" was NIMB, which opposed "the introduction of huge pig factories to the UK" (Soil Association 2013a). The NIMB campaign came about when the SA was approached by a group of farming and animal welfare charities to join an opposition to Midland Pig Producers' proposed new indoor pig unit in Derbyshire. As part of the group's submission to the Council's planning department, the SA wrote a paragraph about the health risks related to high levels of antibiotic use in such units. Then, shortly after the submission, the SA received a threat from an international law firm that specialises in high-profile libel cases (Carter-Ruck), saying that the SA's claims were libellous and that they would be sued. However, the SA responded by researching and compiling more evidence to strengthen their case and gathering more signatories in opposition to the plans. When the evidence was reviewed, the Council decided to block planning for the pig unit and Carter-Ruck retracted the libel threat. But rather than bringing the campaign to a close, the SA is still gathering evidence

and building coalitions with other organisations so that they can respond rapidly and effectively to any similar threats that might emerge in the future.

Perhaps unexpectedly, when asked if NIMB was part of an overt strategy of using antagonistic tactics to pressurise incumbent actors, SA-4 replied that it was “terribly not at all” the case, explaining that: “we’re trying to be in a position where other farming organisations and food businesses or food organisations see us as perhaps an ally or interested party” (SA-4). Thus, SA-4 further distinguished between reactive public campaigns like NIMB, in which the SA responded to an attack, and more proactive public campaigns. Of the latter type, the most recent example (eight or nine years ago) was an information leaflet about the dangers of pesticides used in non-organic farming that the SA distributed through an organic box scheme. According to SA-4, the SA used to do more of this sort of campaigning, especially around GM, but has decided to move away from it in recent years in order to build more trust with mainstream actors. SA-5 corroborated this point, explaining that the deficit of trust generated by the use of antagonistic tactics is a particular problem in Scotland. Talking about how the SA is perceived by Scottish farmers, SA-5 observed that “the negative part of the Soil Association is that campaigning side, and I think it is deep-rooted, and I think it has been formed in their minds quite a long time ago”. However, this doesn’t mean that the SA will pull away entirely from antagonistic campaigning. After all, SA-2 commented that: “I am all for demonising retailers when they do bad stuff”, but with the following proviso: “we need to be really robust” (SA-2).

Overall, the sense given by SA staff involved with campaigning is that criticising incumbent actors carries high risks and must therefore be done with care, when the gains to be made outweigh the probable losses. Hence, in the wake of the recent horse meat contamination scandal, which has been blamed on regulatory failures (Press Association 2013, Stones 2013), the SA has been more circumspect than it was in response to past food scares. In the absence of full blown public campaigns, it nonetheless released statements to the food industry press reinforcing the trustworthiness and integrity of organic food, calling it “the most heavily regulated on the planet” (Bateman 2013).

In contrast to this reactive, antagonistic style of campaign, the FFLP provides a different model for driving organic market growth and broader change. In 2003, responding to emerging concerns about the quality of school food that were attracting media attention, the SA launched their 'Food for Life' campaign and released a report that argued for changes to school food procurement and food education. Three years later, the SA received funding from the Big Lottery⁵⁹ to turn the campaign into a practical programme that could be trialled and then rolled out to schools across the country: the Food for Life Partnership (FFLP). Through the FFLP, the SA worked with schools (particularly head teachers, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and Local Education Authorities (LEAs)) to help them with:

“growing their own food; organising trips to farms; sourcing food from local bakers, butchers and farmers; setting up school farmers’ markets; holding community food events; providing cooking and growing clubs for pupils and their families; and serving freshly prepared, locally sourced meals that follow a rigorous Food for Life Catering Mark” (Food for Life Partnership 2013).

According to SA-2, the FFLP is about driving institutional change, and arose from SA staff asking the question: “How do you work with institutions to normalise organic in an area where government refuses to do that?” Thus, the choice to work within schools was about identifying a setting in which the campaign would have a “multiplier effect” (SA-2), “where can you drive behaviour and attitudinal change beyond what happens in that environment” (ibid.). Distinguishing this approach from the approach taken by Sustain, who have a campaign around school food that focuses on central government policy change, SA-2 said that, “regulation is not what we’re about [...] it’s about transformation of attitudes about food”. He went on to explain in more detail:

“Why I think it’s good to go school-by-school is because if you leave a school in two years’ time, where [...] their approach to food has transformed so much that they

⁵⁹ The funding was different in the Scottish context: “The total project itself has cost us just under a million pounds and we will get 80% of that from the Scottish Government” (SA-5).

are running breakfast clubs, the head teacher is serving dinner to everybody, and knows everybody by name precisely because she is serving food to everybody, whereby they've changed their sense of how they teach using food, you know they've actually changed their curriculum around it, they've changed parents attitudes to food, you know. I think you're changing more there than you ever would through regulatory change" (SA-2)

In terms of measurable outcomes, in 2011 the FFLP estimated that more than 300,000 children from 3,800 schools were eating FFL catering mark⁶⁰ accredited meals every day⁶¹ (Food for Life Partnership 2011). In the same year the SA commissioned three independent studies to demonstrate the impact of the programme against its aims, i.e. to improve children's health, tackle inequalities between them, improve their educational attainment, stimulate local enterprise and contribute towards sustainable development (Knuutila and Kersley 2011, Orme, Jones et al. 2011, Teeman, Featherstone et al. 2011). Together, the three reports claim that the FFLP has led to positive changes in the observed behaviour and attainment of children at school; children's and parents' reported consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables; school meal uptake; Ofsted ratings of schools; and the Social Return on Investment of school catering budgets.

Lobbying

Out of 32 proposed actions that are listed in the SA's recent strategy document, 'The Road to 2020', only three concern attempts to influence policies and policymakers (Soil Association 2011c). These three actions are about supporting organic agriculture by incentivising it (Soil Association 2011c: 9), improving the responsiveness of existing policies to its needs (Soil Association 2011c: 17), and improving existing regulations (Soil Association 2011c: 9). However, the activities of the SA documented so far concern a much wider spectrum of issues around the sustainability of food systems, which are not

⁶⁰ An important part of the delivery of the FFLP, which fell under the SA's remit within the partnership, was the development and roll-out of an accredited standard for catering, known as the Food for Life (FFL) Catering Mark, which I will return to in the next section.

⁶¹ In August 2013 the SA's website stated that 4,500 schools were enrolled in the FFLP.

currently being tackled through lobbying. When I asked SA staff about this, they explained that they're not doing much lobbying (i.e. activities aimed at changing legislation and policy frameworks, banning products, or gaining political support for organics) because they don't believe that it's the most effective way for the SA to drive change. Whereas SA-4 candidly remarked that, "sometimes parliamentary legislation by governments fails to achieve any significant change at all", SA-2 decried the ineffectiveness of lobbying in the context of current political opportunity structures, saying that, "in this environment regulation is not even a hammer to crack a nut; it's a little bit like pissing in the wind".

The only other current activity of the SA that concerns policy and policymakers is the NIMB campaign, insofar as the SA sought to influence the local authority's decision about the planning outcome. So in conclusion, the SA does engage in some activities that embody the characteristic of lobbying, but it does so mostly with respect to winning policy support for organic agriculture, the notable exception being a reactive campaign where the policy aim was to influence a local planning decision. More generally, lobbying is not a big part of the current strategic approach of the organisation, due to a perception that it is ineffective as compared to other tactics.

9.1.1.4 Regime reform

As I will go on to show in this section, the SA currently embodies the characteristic of embedding through its attempts to both (1) alter organic and other more sustainable systems into acceptable formats so that they can be incorporated within regime contexts, and (2) alter regime contexts to make them fit better with those systems. Moreover, doing so requires the SA to embody the characteristic of negotiation, by managing relationships with both niche and regime actors – i.e. building trust and confidence in the presence of sharp technical, social, or cognitive divides, and responding judiciously to opportunities for alignment between organic systems and regime contexts. However, in addition to critically applying the definitions of these characteristics to the SA's activities, in this section I will also seek to deepen and extend my understanding of them by asking two open questions. With respect to embedding, which niche elements are being

embedded within regime configurations? And with respect to negotiation, how is the process of embedding being negotiated?

Embedding

In the previous section I introduced the concept of ‘campaigns that become programmes’ to explain how the FFLP developed from a campaign to educate people and raise public awareness into a practical program of interventions in public institutions. However, in addition to this, I identified certain kinds of activities that could be called ‘programmes that become schemes’, which is exemplified by the subsequent evolution of the FFLP from a school food programme into a commercial catering standard. Using this language, there is an increasing scale of magnitude from campaigns to programmes to schemes, as well as changes in other dimensions that will be discussed below. Thus, I would argue that the work of translating campaigns into programmes, and programmes into schemes, is closely related to the work of embedding niche innovations into regime contexts. As such, there are currently two main schemes operated by the SA: (1) the production standards, and (2) the FFL catering mark. Both are based on standards.

Interestingly, this transition of initiatives from campaigns to programmes to schemes is reflected in terms of how they are handled within the SA. In short, the charity is where the development and crafting of initiatives takes place, whereas SA-CERT takes them out into the world and maintains them over time. In the words of SA-3:

“A lot of the initial development, a lot of the early thinking, is done in the Soil Association Charity. And then, actually once you get to a point at which it is a scheme which is going to be much more business-focussed and have a much wider remit [...] it passes across to SA-CERT to roll out and run it on that basis [...] SA-CERT are responsible for running schemes and programmes where there is really change on scale” (SA-3).

As explained in section 9.1.1.2, the development of the SA’s organic production standards in the 1970’s was driven by organic farmers, out of an impetus to codify what they were

doing. The aims of this were to create both a new marketing opportunity for their produce, and a rule-set which would protect them from being undercut by rogue traders. In short, it was not about trying to embed organic practices into the incumbent food regime. However, the SA's production standards paved the way for other changes, including the introduction of legislation around organic food, the appearance of organic food on the shelves of large multiple retailers, and the growth in organic sales throughout the 1980's to the 2000's that accompanied these changes (Smith 2006).

Moreover, the SA's standards schemes have since developed into elaborate and highly formalised operations which involve multiple and frequent interactions with regime practices, routines, systems, and patterns of use. SA-3 described some of the configurations of regime elements that the SA has had to work with in order to deliver the standards, i.e. surrounding EU regulations of inspection, certification and accreditation, which will be discussed further below in connection to the characteristic of negotiation:

“On a day to day basis what certification now means is something quite specific really, it is a formal process legally defined with EU regulations of inspection and certification, so on an annual basis every farmer, grower, processor, anyone who wants to call their products organic, by law, have to be inspected by an accredited certification body of which the Soil Association certification is by far the largest body in the UK.” (SA-3)

But which niche elements are being embedded within these regime configurations? The SA's most recent production standard, updated in 2012, outlines a number of principles that are divided between four areas of practice: agricultural, environmental, food processing and social. These practices, the standard reads, “form the foundations of organic farming” upon which the standards' rules have been established (Soil Association 2012c: 7). They apply to the farm (for horticultural and arable crops, livestock and aquaculture), the supply chain (for food processing and packing, distribution, retail and catering), and any imported organic produce from outside of the EU. There are 216 pages

of technical requirements and recommendations in the standard, as well as additional documents that cover livestock markets, abattoirs and slaughtering, and ethical trade.

However, the social configuration of these sets of practices is also crucial to the standard's purpose, implying that there may be additional embedded elements. In the text of the standard this is explained in terms of reasons for the SA maintaining its own standards despite there being legal organic standards in place. The three reasons stated are: (1) "to uphold integrity, maintain trust and so safeguard your market", (2) "to react to new understanding", and (3) "for the organic movement to own the standards" (Soil Association 2012c: 12). SA-5 put it like this: "Nowadays we [consumers] are so far removed [i.e. from food production] that standards have quite a big part to play in how we trust what we are able to buy". For SA-3, standards are about: "underpinning the values that someone places on that symbol when they pick a product off the shelf". SA-3 gave an example of this:

"I think that one of the reasons the Soil Association symbol carries so much weight in the market with ethical consumers, is because when there are typically these big issues, like food safety issues or health scares, the Soil Association is more than able to show what we have done. For example, the Soil Association banned the feeding of blood and bone meal to herbivores ten years before BSE and there has still never been a case of BSE on a Soil Association certified farm." (SA-3)

SA-3 also went on to explain that, "where the certification process is probably at its strongest is where the gap between production and consumption is the biggest" (SA-3), i.e. where "there is no direct connection between the people who are finally consuming that product and the people who are producing it, and so that chain is cut, and the integrity that goes with it becomes more important" (ibid.).

Hence, if, in addition to the specific (organic) values which inform organic practices, these notions of trust, integrity, connection, safeguarding and ownership – which are recognised within the literature on AFNs as crucial to standards schemes (Whatmore, Stassart et al. 2003, Goodman and Goodman 2009) – can also be considered as embedded elements,

then the SA's production standards can be understood in terms of an attempt to embed not only organic agricultural, environmental, food processing and social practices, but also knowledge, values, and patterns of control and ownership, into regime contexts.

Turning to the FFL catering mark, there are both similarities and contrasts between this scheme and the production standards. Both are run by SA-CERT, because, like the production standards, the FFLP "requires inspections and verifications" (SA-3). However, unlike the production standard, the FFL catering mark's standards are set by an independent standards committee convened by the five CSOs that form the FFLP. The production standards, in contrast, are set by the charity's standards committees and backed up by EU regulations. Moreover, the FFL catering mark does not apply to farmers. Instead, it can apply to "any food provider who serves meals outside of the home, including restaurants, canteens, schools, universities, care homes and hospitals" (Soil Association 2013i). Also unlike the production standards, the catering mark has different levels (bronze, silver and gold), which enables participating organisations to follow a "tiered, step-wise progression" (SA-5).

Still, the FFL catering mark differs most conspicuously from the production standards by virtue of not being an organic standard. In order to achieve the bronze standard, caterers must instead ensure that a range of criteria are met, pertaining to: seasonality and freshness; lack of prior processing, GM ingredients, "undesirable" food additives and hydrogenated fats; meeting food safety, animal welfare and fish conservation standards in outlets and supply chains; provision of training for catering staff; availability of free drinking water; provision of information on food provenance; and compliance with applicable national standards. In order to achieve the silver and gold standards, caterers must meet all the bronze criteria and additionally earn a certain number of points through their sourcing of ingredients. In this scheme, different ethical standards are weighted

differently, with the organic production standard having the highest weighting and thus conferring the greatest number of points⁶².

Thus, it makes sense to ask how the niche elements that are being embedded with the FFL catering mark are socially configured within regime contexts, and which values they are underpinned by. According to SA-CERT's website, the catering mark is an "independent endorsement" of caterers, "providing reassurance to customers that meals are freshly prepared using environmentally-sustainable and seasonal ingredients" by communicating about the "provenance and traceability" of the food that they serve (Soil Association 2013i). As with the production standard, this belies the importance of certain values, in addition to the management practices mentioned above (i.e. food sourcing, staff training, safety procedures and so on). But in terms of which kinds of values are being embedded, the answer is not so obvious. When asked why the SA has opted to use a range of criteria and standards instead of just using organic standards in the catering mark, SA-1 and SA-2 explained it in the following ways:

"We're hoping to get more people engaged in and excited about health and sustainability in food, and some of those people will eat more organic food, but that's not why we're doing it. We're doing it because fundamentally this organisation is about health and sustainability in food." (SA-1)

"It's about being proud of organic and the work we have done in creating a market mechanism there, but it's also about finding common cause with others that allows us to build a sort of larger coalition so that we begin to hit some of that stuff at scale" (SA-2)

Looking at the situation in the light of what is already known about the SA, these comments suggest that the FFL catering mark should be seen as another attempt by the organisation to cross boundaries and build coalitions around "wider sustainability issues"

⁶² Other standards that score points include: the UK Government's free range standards for meat, the MSC and Marine Conservation Society (MCS)'s standards for fisheries, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)'s Freedom Food standards for meat and farmed fish, any fair-trade standard accredited by Fairtrade International (FLO), and the Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF) standard.

(SA-2) with other organisations outside of the organic movement. Hence, the practices and values embedded by the catering mark are those of a larger coalition that includes the SA but is much broader and more diverse. Moreover, by relying mostly on standards that are maintained independently by other CSOs (i.e. the MSC, MCS, RSPCA, FLO and LEAF) the catering mark is socially configured according to patterns of ownership that reflect the broader movement.

So in summary, I have found that the SA currently embodies the characteristic of embedding through two separate schemes that seek to insert configurations of niche elements – practices, knowledge, values, and patterns of control and ownership relating to food production and catering – into existing food regimes.

Negotiation

In my attempt to extend and deepen my understanding of this characteristic (negotiation) I have identified four different kinds: (1) negotiations about the selection of niche-based solutions to regime problems, (2) negotiations about the implementation of niche-based solutions, (3) negotiations about the regulation of niche-based solutions, and (4) negotiations to enrol regime actors as patrons of niche-based solutions. In the rest of this section I will use examples from the SA's two schemes discussed above, as well as other relevant initiatives, to illustrate these proposed concepts.

Negotiations about selection: As outlined in section 9.1.1.3 above, over the years the SA has engaged in various campaigning and lobbying activities to curry favour for its organic production standards and the FFL catering mark. In other words, the SA has engaged in negotiations which have improved the chances of its own niche-based solutions being adopted by policymakers and the public. Furthermore, the examples provided in section 9.1.1.3 above indicate that the SA has achieved this by linking its own niche based solutions to perceived problems with incumbent systems (e.g. in the aftermath of food scares). Additionally, in its current attempts to promote the FFL catering mark as a solution to regime problems, the SA emphasises specific evaluation criteria to regime actors. For instance, with respect to public sector bodies – which account for the vast

majority of catering mark clients – the SA emphasises those organisations’ obligations of care towards their end users (whether they are schoolchildren, patients or inmates). However for private sector clients the SA recognises that cost saving, competitiveness and risk avoidance are, “what really matters” (SA-2). SA-2 articulated the SA’s aim in this regard:

“Wouldn’t it be great if we had an evidence base that said if you invested in better food for your employees, delivered a better food culture more broadly for your employees, then your days off for sickness would be less. That’s what really drives companies” (SA-2)

Negotiations about implementation: Once enough support has been generated for niche-based solutions – such that opportunities to embed them within regime contexts start to emerge – negotiations about their implementation are crucial to their practical success. In this vein, the SA has worked with organic producers and schools to inspire action and encourage them to strive for higher standards in their day-to-day practice. Whilst the SA’s Organic Food Awards have helped to stimulate competition around food quality since it was launched in 1989, the producer support team have encouraged farmers not just to meet the standards of practice discussed above, but to surpass them. On the other hand, the FFL catering mark’s bronze-silver-gold categories have stimulated competition between local authorities in Scotland (SA-5). Inspired by East Ayrshire Council, which has obtained the gold standard for its schools, Stirling Council and the Highland Council have made fast progress by enrolling all their schools simultaneously and achieving the bronze standard within only 18 months.

The SA has also had to enter into intense negotiations with catering suppliers in order to tackle the more difficult aspects of implementation. On a day-to-day basis, running the FFL catering mark means working directly with caterers, and, as explained by SA-5, “when you get down to the caterers, budgets are important”. Yet the SA is “asking them to spend more money on their ingredients” (SA-5) in order to achieve a higher quality of food service. In practice, this leads to a raft of mismatches between the caterers’ established

routines and infrastructures, and the ones that they have to get to grips with in order to implement the catering mark. For instance, the catering mark has a rule that 75% of produce must be freshly prepared on site. However, many of the meals on offer in Scottish hospitals contain more than 25% cooked chicken, as few hospital kitchens have the facilities to cook poultry onsite (SA-5). Moreover, when the SA looked into sourcing cooked chicken that complies with UK animal welfare standards they couldn't find any on the market. Similarly, hospital caterers tend to use liquid eggs, but they have come across problems trying to find cage-free liquid eggs at big enough volumes and affordable prices to be viable within their catering budgets (SA-5).

As suggested above, the way that the SA has sought to overcome these obstacles is by encouraging close collaboration across the supply chain and product development in specific areas. According to SA-5, "it's all about partnerships" and, "the alliances in the supply chain that will help us move forward" (SA-5). Thus, the SA has set up a supplier scheme, which enables wholesalers, ingredient suppliers and food producers to be vetted and granted a seal of approval as FFL catering mark 'supplier members'.

Negotiations about regulation: In order to function in the context of the food regime, the SA's standards have to fit with regime criteria describing 'good' standards. The SA achieves this by both altering their standards to 'fit-and-conform' with regime contexts, and attempting to 'stretch-and-transform' regime contexts to fit with their standards (Smith 2007). In terms of attempts to fit-and-conform, the SA goes beyond compliance with existing regulations and what is considered good practice in order to win trust and acceptance for their production standards. In the words of SA-3, "we wanted to be able to stand up and if anyone questioned if we were operating in an appropriate manner we could answer that question. So we became UKAS accredited years before it was a requirement". Additionally, the SA demonstrates the credibility of the FFL catering mark by associating it with standards for best practice set by government. For instance, as well as encompassing compliance with all statutory regulations for food service, the FFL catering mark also complies with the recently introduced Government Buying Standards (GBS) for food and catering, which are voluntary guidelines.

In terms of attempts to stretch-and-transform existing contexts, the SA's efforts to amend the EU's organic regulations are paramount. For instance, "the Soil Association and most of the organic movement" (SA-3) are, at least in theory, "in favour of allowing human treated sewage to be used again within organic agriculture" (ibid.), which is currently banned under EU legislation. This issue, and a raft of other issues including animal welfare and energy use, form the basis of on-going lobbying by the SA to amend the EU organic regulation. In negotiations with the European government, the SA co-operates with around seven or eight other European organic standard-setting organisations.

Negotiations about enrolment: In order to ensure the on-going survival of niche-based solutions in regime contexts the SA encourages regime actors to take ownership of them. Hence, as described in section 9.1.1.2 above, the SA regularly engages with a cross-section of regime actors, including non-organic farmers, scientists, supermarkets, independent and online retailers, landowners, CSOs from outside the sustainable food movement, as well as a range of governmental bodies, including those mentioned below:

"We have a long relationship with people like Defra and we are working more and more with the devolved institutions, not just the nations, but the health and wellbeing boards and other local authorities and institutions with power at the local level. And we used to work a lot with the regional development bodies, before they were all gone." (SA-1)

The AssureWel Project provides a particularly good example of how the SA is enrolling actors like these in the development of food production standards. The project – which is a collaborative effort between the SA, the RSPCA and the University of Bristol – aims to develop a new animal welfare assessment system that can be used in organic and mainstream farm assurance schemes alike, but which ensures better welfare outcomes than existing mainstream standards (AssureWel 2013). Once the new systems have been field-tested within the SA's and RSPCA's own standards schemes, the plan is to incorporate them into other schemes, including some that are owned by large commercial standard-setting organisations (e.g. Red Tractor Assurance and Quality Meat Scotland).

Thus, in addition to the development of its own standards, the SA is also involving itself in the development of other farm assurance schemes. As a result, the SA's new configurations of high-welfare farming – including the systems for implementing them, as well as control and ownership – will potentially be fully embedded within regime contexts.

Another example is provided by the FFLP, which has developed a “commissionable model” (SA-2) to offer to LAs and other public sector clients. This combines all the services provided by the FFLP to individual schools, along with the services provided to catering outlets by SA-CERT, into a single package. The model works by allocating a manager to the client organisation, whose job it is to facilitate and co-ordinate the achievement of the FFL catering mark standards. This involves working closely with employees, suppliers and service-users to develop the necessary capabilities. Local authorities in Lincolnshire, Calderdale, Devon, Warwickshire, Kirklees, Bath & North East Somerset, Cornwall, Cambridgeshire and Derbyshire have already commissioned the FFLP in this way. Though this model does not necessarily lead to the catering mark's standards being formally embedded within legislation, nor does it hand over control and ownership to regime actors in the way that the AssureWel project does, it promises to create a level of institutionalisation that is less reversible than certification alone.

9.1.1.5 Summary

The findings discussed in this section – concerning the roles played by the SA, both concurrently and over time – are summarised in Figure 25 and Table 17 at the end of the chapter (for an explanation of the method by which the diagram was created, see CHAPTER 7, section 7.1.1.4). As shown by the figures, the SA's current activities characterise three of the four roles in the RIT framework; niche development, normative contestation and regime reform. Nonetheless, the large arrow in the bottom left corner reminds the reader that, in the past, the SA did play a role in the creation of organic food systems (grassroots innovation), which it has subsequently given up. The two other dark arrows represent the subsequent re-positionings of the SA, (1) from the 1980's to 1990's, before which the organisation focussed strategically on the development of the organic niche, and after which it focussed on disruptive campaigns that promoted organic food as

a solution to regime problems, and (2) during the 2000's, when it developed a new strategic focus on reforming incumbent food regimes, by developing schemes to embed niche elements into regime contexts. But unlike the first repositioning, the SA has not given up these other roles. Rather, it has grown into a large and multifaceted organisation that plays multiple roles simultaneously, reaping both synergies and tensions as a result.

In particular, the close relationships that the SA has fostered with regime actors opens up tensions related to its campaigning and lobbying activities, which risks undermining the organisation's legitimacy and leading to "difficult relationships" (SA-5). These tensions – which have been alluded to throughout the chapter – are often expressed in terms of the dichotomy between charitable values, emphasised in the SA's performance of the niche development and normative contestation roles, and commercial values, which come into play when the SA adopts the regime reform role. In the words of SA-6, SA-3 and SA-5:

"I think that there has been a kind of interesting evolution in the organisation's journey in terms of how far it is perceived, or sees itself indeed, as a kind of marketing body or a trade body as it were. And the real tension between that and being a sort of membership, campaigning charity. I think that's undeniably true."
(SA-6)

"There are a number of other certification bodies out there and it's a very competitive business and we suffer from being a charity aiming to deliver charitable purposes, whereas our competitors don't have that charitable aspect"
(SA-3)

"We have pushed our boundaries way back because I think that there is a realisation that to get anybody anywhere towards organic we need to start on a journey [...] and actually a lot of the licensees are saying that's just not good enough. You know, 'you've stopped talking about organic, you're just talking about Tesco'. So there's a backlash there." (SA-5)

In terms of how these tensions and synergies might be resolved as the SA looks to the future, SA-6 offered the following thoughts:

“So given those two approaches, I mean given one which is going to head very much towards, you know, effectively relying on local authority public health funding [exemplified by the FFLP] and another approach which is, you know, via the Duchy [exemplified by the Duchy Originals Future Farming Programme], so effectively sort of Prince Charles is our kind of patron funding us, and that’s going to want to be very careful to not kind of in any way sort of threaten the reputation of the royal house, et cetera. I think it’s going to be much more around the kind of reasonable, sort of big tent approach of getting lots of people around the table and a kind of evolutionary rather than revolutionary change.” (SA-6)

Thus, the pale arrow in the upper middle section of the shaded area in Figure 25 suggests that a future repositioning may see the SA shift away from normative contestation in favour of extending their program of regime reforms.

9.1.2 The linked organisations

My analysis of the extent to which the linked organisations’ activities are characteristic of the different roles in transition is summarised in two different formats (see Table 17 and Figure 26 at the end of the chapter). These figures are constructed in the same way as Table 10 and Figure 20.

Table 17 and Figure 27 reveal that most of the organisations in the SA’s network embody core characteristics of multiple roles, though two of them are more specialised, engaging in activities that characterise the normative contestation role only. But even then, these activities relate to other roles at the same time. For instance, instead of being interpreted in the context of attempts to disrupt support for incumbent regimes and shift favour towards alternative systems (normative contestation), the FEC’s Business Forum, deliberative workshops and tools for decision-making could all be interpreted in the context of the negotiations involved in reforming incumbent regimes (regime reform).

Likewise, rather than interpreting the support and promotion of producers by CIWF as an attempt to shift favour towards alternative systems (normative contestation), it could be interpreted in the context of the strategic development of practices that exist within a high welfare farming niche (niche development). Hence, these activities do not relate to the roles in a discrete manner. Nonetheless, all of the eight organisations engage in activities that characterise one or two roles most prominently, and none of them appear to play all four roles simultaneously. So there is a degree of specialisation.

Moreover, like in the T&PH and FD cases, all of the key roles are played by multiple organisations in the network, meaning that they collectively have all the roles covered. But unlike the T&PH and FD cases, in which the niche development role is most frequently played, in this case the normative contestation role is most frequently played and the second most frequently played role is niche development. There is also a lot of activity that is characteristic of the regime reform role, and comparably little that characterises the grassroots innovation role.

9.2 Relationships

In this section I will first describe the *substantial relationships* (Sayer 1992) that each of the linked organisations have with the SA. I will then briefly comment on the extent to which each of them is *formally related* (Sayer 1992) to the SA through their identifications with a UK food and farming policy/issue field and different social movements.

9.2.1 Substantial relations

9.2.1.1 Unicorn Grocery

There are a few connections between the SA and Unicorn. First, as stated clearly on Unicorn's website and in the store itself, the SA certifies all of Unicorn's own-branded organic products – which are mostly bulk dry goods that are packaged on site – as well as the fresh produce from Unicorn's growing project, the 'Moss Brook Growers'. In addition, both organisations present information about each other on their own websites; Unicorn features news and information about some of the SA's campaigns and projects, whereas

the SA features Unicorn's "Grow a Grocery" guide – which was produced by Unicorn with support from Sustain – on the section of their website that contains resources for helping people to set up organic buying groups (OBGs). Moreover, the SA has promoted Unicorn as an example of good practice a number of times in reports and at events, such as the showcase event that they held in Macclesfield in 2012 called 'Scaling Up Local Food Enterprises', and the two reports that they published about organic buying groups in 2011 and 2012 (Soil Association 2011b, Soil Association 2012b); the following comment from SA-2 gives a sense of the positive light in which the SA views Unicorn: "I'm really struck actually by Unicorn in Manchester at the moment, which I love, it's so-- you know I wish everywhere had three Unicorns" (SA-2). In short, both organisations display their connections to each other publicly, each clearly perceiving that there are gains to be made from making their relationship known. Conversely, my research didn't reveal any sources of tension or antagonism between them.

9.2.1.2 Growing Communities

The relationship between the SA and Grow Com bears strong resemblances to the relationship between the SA and Unicorn. The SA certifies all the fresh produce that's grown at Grow Com's market gardens and farms, and in 2013 awarded Grow Com the top prize in the fruit and vegetables category at the Organic Food Awards for its "Hackney Salad" (Soil Association 2013k). The SA has also used Grow Com as a case study in a report that it published about CSA (Soil Association 2011a) and hosts several pages about Grow Com on its website that celebrate different aspects of the organisation and promote upcoming Grow Com events. SA-2's comment about Unicorn and Grow Com captures something of the similarly positive light in which the SA views them both, and indicates why this is the case:

"[you need the] Unicorns and Growing Communities and CSAs of this world to show you what's possible and to demonstrate what the alternative-- and to test the models and develop them [...] they may not be ready to float into the world immediately, and that may be some of the learning that we're getting. But you

wouldn't want to have a world without them, because you'd never have an alternative" (SA-2)

Like Unicorn, Grow Com communicates about its connections to the SA through its website. However, it does so in a less promotional manner, and the only information it supplies about the SA is in the form of a hyperlink taking visitors to the SA's site to find out about the SA's adult growing courses. Furthermore, hinting at a slight tension between the two organisations, Grow Com-1 explained to me that the SA only started taking notice of Grow Com when it became aware of the peak oil problem, after which the SA started taking local food systems in general more seriously than they had before. On the contrary, no expressions of tension or antagonism were expressed by SA staff in interviews when they talked about Grow Com.

9.2.1.3 Garden Organic

GO and the SA have co-existed for a long time (in organisational terms). Rather than describe their relationship myself, I have quoted the following comment from GO-1 in full because it highlights many of the dynamics with which I am interested:

"Both organisations are 50-ish years old give or take, both were sort of founded or certainly run, considering the conservatism at the time, by very passionate individuals. And I think there was a common understanding that the Soil Association dealt with farmers and farming, and sort of Garden Organic – or HDRA, we doubled as a research association, which is what our former name is – focused on sort of individual gardeners and horticulture. And I think that that was, you know, the divide, and the spectrum was fairly well defined. With the rise of local food, clearly both organisations have had an opportunity to move towards more of the kind of centre ground and have worked [...] on projects and programs of, you know, local food in all of its manifestations and with the different sorts of audiences. That has resulted in fabulous partnerships, like the Food for Life Partnership, where we each have particular roles that we can play in contributing to a project that's greater than the sum of its parts. It equally has resulted in

competition for, you know, certain business services and things, which again I don't think is unhealthy at all. What there is though [...] is a strong respect for each organisation from the staff and from our members and from trustees. And certainly we share, for example, the same patron. And we share, you know, maybe funders and benefactors as well. And it's important for us as two organisations, you know, very passionate about the work that we do, that we work together well where it makes sense to work together well, and that we offer alternatives where it is important and good to offer alternatives.” (GO-1)

So to summarise, the two organisations appear to have many similarities, in that they were both founded, and are allegedly still run by, passionate individuals; they (allegedly) share strong mutual respect for each other (which is consistent with how SA-2, SA-3 and SA-8 talked about GO); and they share the same patron (HRH the Prince of Wales), as well as many of the same funders, and potentially benefactors too. Moreover, there are many similarities in the kinds of activities that they undertake (see above and section 9.1.2 above). What GO-1 also suggests is that over time the two organisations enacted a conscious division of labour with respect to the organic movement; the SA focussing on farming and GO on gardening. However, he noted that, with the rise of the local food movement, they have both moved into this new centre ground, giving rise to new forms of collaboration – exemplified by the Food for Life Partnership (discussed in section 9.1.1 above) – and competition – e.g. to provide business services.

9.2.1.4 Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming

The Food Issues Census (discussed in CHAPTER 3, section 3.2) found that Sustain and the SA stand out in comparison to all the other CSOs in the food and farming sector, by virtue of the number of connections that they have with other organisations. They both act as ‘hubs’, connecting organisations to each other through their projects and networks; between the two, however, Sustain was shown to have the most connections. Despite this similarity, there are many differences between the two organisations, especially in terms of their financial, organisational and management styles and structures. Sustain has

very little core funding – most of its funds come from grants and are earmarked for the delivery of projects. This means that Sustain often responds opportunistically to the criteria of funders, and seizes the chance to launch a project when public support or political pressure enables it. Hence, when asked in an interview about strategic planning, Sustain-1 commented that, “I’d rather have my fingernails pulled out”, because, “the world doesn’t keep still while you’re trying to draw up your strategic plan”. The SA, on the other hand, which has just published a strategic plan called ‘The Road to 2020’, generates half its revenue from certification, which gives it a large amount of unrestricted funds to do with as it pleases. As a result, the SA employs a lot more staff on permanent contracts, and funds its own projects when grants are not available. A corollary of this is that the SA has a more hierarchical structure than Sustain. These differences aside, SA-6 nonetheless explained that they both pursue a, “gradualist, policy-oriented approach” (SA-6).

In terms of connections between the two organisations, they recently formed a partnership to support CSA schemes and OBGs, funded by the Plunkett Foundation’s ‘Making Local Food Work’ programme. However, their contributions were fairly separate and the project didn’t involve working too closely together. Other than this, the two organisations tend not to collaborate with each other too often. They do, however, frequently share ideas and criticism about each other’s work, both formally – e.g. Sustain’s policy director sits on the SA’s catering standards committee – as well as informally. One such recent exchange between the two organisations has concerned how to drive change in public sector food standards. SA-2 reported that, “I’ve had some really healthy discussions with Sustain recently about regulatory change and about whether it’s worth it”. The two extended quotations below, both from an interview with Sustain-1, reveal another side to the story. But despite Sustain-1’s arguments, SA-2 simply concluded that, “regulation is not what we’re about”.

“I’m very interested to speak to some colleagues of mine when they’re back in, because yesterday they had a meeting with a couple of people from the Soil Association to talk about our new campaign on hospital food [...] and [the Soil Association] have indicated that they think that we’re wrong to be trying to have a

legislative campaign to set legally binding rules to try and improve the sustainability of hospital food, because this government is not interested in legislation and we're in a recession and blah, blah, blah... I think their argument is that we should just be concentrating on good practice, but I may be caricaturing that. But certainly there are some elements of the Soil Association who have been arguing that, you know, 'what's the point in asking for legislation if this government won't legislate?' My view is: they're Government. The clue is in the title. I don't care if they don't want to legislate. We're going to make them."

"My worry is that-- So for example, the Food for Life campaign, the Big Lottery-funded project in schools, fantastically successful, loads of schools doing wonderful work. In my opinion, what they should've been doing earlier in that campaign, is making sure that it got put into the routine school system, whether that be legislation and/or Ofsted inspections, and/or teacher training, and/or school building programmes, and so on, so that-- basically I think that it is the job of every voluntary organisation and campaigning organisation to reach the day when they no longer need to exist. It is literally our job to put ourselves out of business. And frankly the sooner, the better. So I don't want to be running a public sector food campaign forever. I just want to win. And my worry is, in order to feed a big organisation with staff and budgets and all of that, they think, 'no, no, no, we need to carry on running the food in schools programme with lots of money coming in, doing it school by school by school, 'oh there's lots of schools that we haven't done yet, that'll keep us going for ages'. And I'm thinking, 'No. No, no, no, no. That's just wrong'. That's just so wrong I can't even begin to tell you how wrong it is. We need to demonstrate it's possible and then put the pressure on all the policy leaders we can think of and find to make it routine and normal, because the one thing that I now know about good practice is it doesn't spread."

9.2.1.5 The Food Ethics Council

The SA and the FEC have numerous links, especially related to personnel. For instance, the SA's current Chief Executive is chair of the FEC's voluntary council, whilst the long-standing Director of the FEC recently left the post to join the SA as Director of Innovation. Another individual, a university academic, sits on both the FEC and SA councils. But despite these connections, they tend not to collaborate formally. Rather, they prefer to invite each other to participate in and contribute towards their own events and projects in ways that maintain clear boundaries and affiliations. To that end, the FEC promotes Soil Association events, including the annual conference, Organic Fortnight and various others, on the FEC website, and FEC staff and council members have spoken at SA events and written blogs for the SA website. Likewise, SA staff and council members have contributed articles to the FEC's magazine, Food Ethics, and frequently spoken at FEC Business Forums and policy workshops. The SA has also re-blogged articles written by FEC staff and promoted FEC events on its website.

Given the FEC's mission – which is about convening different stakeholders and catalysing dialogue on difficult issues (see section 9.3.2 below) – it is understandable that the organisation maintains a certain distance from the SA, which is widely perceived to be more closely allied to certain interests rather than others. In the words of FEC-1:

“The Soil Association [...] [is] obviously coming from its own field of interest and to some extent gets written off as ‘that organic lot, they’re not objective, they’re useless’. You know, ‘are they really an NGO or are they a commercial interest?’ [...] And it’s very easy to marginalise the Soil Association in Government. I talk to people in Government who are just so dismissive of organic, and now that’s a whole saga in history, but if you’re not even seeing organic on a legitimate, equal footing as a type of production system, then you’re not going to see the work that they do favourably.” (FEC-1)

FEC-1 went on to talk more about how the SA's status as an organic sector body could also compromise its ability to campaign, as well as its relationships with other stakeholders:

“I’ve always thought that the Soil Association has done very well at promoting organics, but in some ways they’ve never quite done the campaigning side. I would have expected more from them, but then I think they are a weird marriage between being a certification body promoting organics, and then the other stuff they’re doing, say for example around school meals. I can see the synergies but I think that the campaign, the Food for Life campaign, suffers from being seen as the Soil Association. And it’s so important... But then that’s not to say that they haven’t achieved great things with that campaign. And things have to sit somewhere, don’t they.” (FEC-1)

A final comment from FEC-1 shows how the comparison between the SA and Sustain appeals not only to people working within those two organisations, but also to third party observers:

“Sustain has been much more focussed on, well actually what do we need to achieve for this to become a standard that everybody must adhere to? [...] But I suppose where the Soil Association have probably fitted in, where their work has been quite valuable, is that they have been working with people on the ground. You could say that the Soil Association and Sustain have been trying to do different things; one on the ground, one influencing the policy context.” (FEC-1)

9.2.1.6 Compassion in World Farming

In terms of connections to the SA, CIWF has joined in coalitions with the SA and other organisations, such as a recent opposition to intensive pig husbandry systems, and worked with the SA to develop an animal welfare assessment system that can be used in farm assurance schemes (see section 9.1.1.4). Furthermore, CIWF staff members sit on the SA’s agricultural standards committees where they are, according to CIWF-1, “always pushing for higher welfare”. CIWF-1 described the relationship between the organisations as friendly, but revealed some tension that again relates to the SA’s status as a sector body and the impact of this on their standards:

“I think the Soil Association, you know-- I mean we’re good friends. I think they have their own pressures, because their producers all want to cut corners a bit and loosen things up so they can be more competitive and, you know, the purists will say that they don’t want that to happen, and you know, sometimes there’s a big fallout and people leave because they don’t think it’s sort of keeping to its promises. But, on the whole I think they’ve sort of managed to sort of keep their ground. I’m, you know, I did think it was odd when they went to the fish farming, I must say, and we did say that we didn’t really think you could call fish farming organic. But the truth is that in fact if the fish are in Soil Association farms their welfare maybe turns out much better. They have more space in their horrible tanks. So, it’s always kind of a compromise between idealism and harsh reality.”(CIWF-1)

9.2.1.7 The Marine Stewardship Council

The MSC has a couple of connections to the SA. First, the SA’s Scotland Director (SA-5) was previously employed by the MSC as a traceability manager for food service clients, and manager of the MSC’s affairs in Scotland. Second, the MSC owns and maintains a (relatively) widely used food standard, meaning that the SA and the MSC are in the same line of business, if not indirectly in competition with each other. Whereas the MSC standard applies to wild marine fish, the SA’s standard applies to farmed fish; however, some of the same stakeholders that set up the MSC have recently launched a sister organisation, the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), which competes directly with the SA. Third, within the SA’s catering standard (discussed in section 9.1.1.4), caterers are invited to choose between gaining points from buying MSC-certified fish, or from SA-certified organic produce (though they are free to do both); the inclusion of the MSC standard as an equivalent measure of sustainability to the SA’s own organic standards is a mark of respect and support from the SA to the MSC, as no other standard is afforded similar status. Finally, the SA occasionally mentions the MSC in news stories on their website, for instance discussing marine conservation issues and/or encouraging readers to buy MSC-certified fish. The SA, on the other hand, is not made any mention of on the MSC’s website.

Talking about the differences between the SA and MSC, SA-5 made the following two comments:

“At MSC we didn’t do the campaigning. So because we didn’t do that campaigning it absolutely left us very able to have constructive business relationships with those who were not yet perfect and they were happy to talk to us because we weren’t there in the press telling them how bad they were. Whereas in the Soil Association I think there is a real tension.” (SA-5)

“Interestingly MSC doesn’t do certification. MSC is more for setting standards, not for carrying out the audit. And I know that in the Soil Association there is a glass wall, but there is a direct link between certifier and standard-setter through that. MSC does not have that, and you would have to ask them whether that’s a good thing or a bad thing. I think there are options. But sometimes they think, ‘wouldn’t it be great if we were like the Soil Association’, because you have this income stream which is directly associated with what you do.” (SA-5)

Table 15. Synergies and tensions between the SA and the organisations in its network

Org	The SA gains (synergies)	Org gains (synergies)	Tensions
Unicorn	License fees, promotional opportunities, credibility and a model of good practice for OBGs	Technical advice and a marketing tool (certification), credibility, and promotional opportunities	-
Grow-Com	License fees, credibility and a model of good practice for CSA	Technical advice and a marketing tool (certification), credibility, and extensive promotional opportunities	Grow Com perceives slight opportunism on behalf of the SA
GO	Fellowship and support, productive partnerships	Fellowship and support, productive partnerships	Competition to provide certain services, blurring of territorial boundaries cf. local food
Sustain	Occasional collaboration, ideas and criticism	Occasional collaboration, ideas and criticism	Both are critical of each other’s approaches to driving change in public sector food standards; Sustain also worries that the SA’s general desire for self-preservation

			may impinge on their ability to achieve change
FEC	Highly skilled senior personnel, knowledge and expertise via shared staff and councillors, promotional opportunities, speakers for events and guest blogs on website	Knowledge and expertise via shared staff and councillors, promotional opportunities, articles for Food Ethics, speakers for events	FEC perceives the SA as being too tied to commercial and/or political interests to collaborate closely with
CIWF	Occasional collaboration and campaign coalitions, knowledge and expertise via staff on standards committee	Occasional collaboration and campaign coalitions	CIWF perceives the SA's standards to be compromised due to its close relationship with commercial producers
MSC	A standard for wild marine fish to include in the SA's catering standard	Promotional opportunities, exposure within the catering market through the SA's catering standard	Indirect competition between the two standards (and direct competition between the SA and the new ASC)

9.2.2 Formal relations

In interview, respondents from some of these organisations situated their own organisations' strategies with respect to the food system or food systems (Grow Com, Sustain, and the FEC), whereas others adopted a wider frame of reference, e.g. the world (Garden Organic), the world environment and economy (Unicorn), and the world's oceans and seafood market (MSC). Only the respondent from CIWF was more specific when talking about the system that the organisation is seeking to transform (factory farming). In terms of the social movements that they identify with, CIWF talk about leading a global movement against factory farming, and Grow Com refers to the movement for community-led trade. However, both organisations tend to contextualise their efforts within wider frames of reference too, i.e. as part of a wider movement towards humane and sustainable farming (CIWF), and in response to the global challenges of climate change and peak oil (Grow Com). Whereas Sustain positions itself with respect to sustainable development in food and farming, both GO and the SA view themselves as part of the organic movement, as well as being aligned with broader sustainable farming and food movements. However, in contrast to the others, the FEC and the MSC both

purposefully avoid identifying with any specific movement, because (as they both explained) doing so would conflict with their values of objectivity and neutrality.

In Figure 24 (below) I have attempted to represent both the substantial and formal relationships between the organisations in this case using a social worlds/arenas map (Clarke 2005), see CHAPTER 5, section 5.2.1.

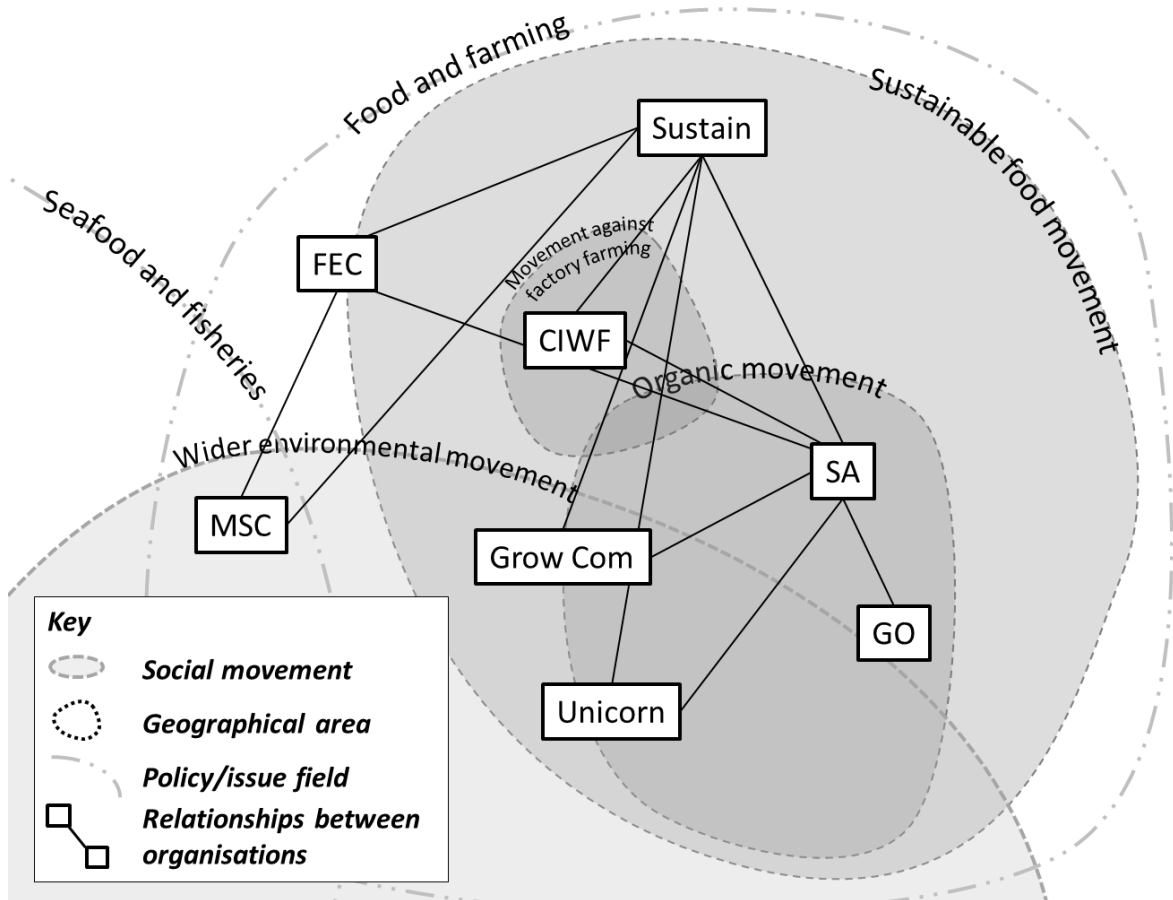


Figure 24. Social worlds/arenas map showing the collective commitments of and relationships between the SA and the organisations in its network.

9.3 Intentions

Now, in this section, I will seek to provide some provisional answers to the following questions (from CHAPTER 5, section 5.2.2):

1. To what extent do the organisations' intended impacts and the perceived roles that the organisations play in wider change processes – as presented in official

documentation and/or espoused by individuals from within the organisations – correspond to the roles in the framework?

2. What degree of similarity/agreement is there amongst (a) the properties that the organisations' associate with sustainable food systems, as presented in official documentation and/or espoused by individuals from within the organisations, and (b) those individuals' espoused theories concerning the most likely drivers of transition towards sustainability?

First I will look at the SA in detail, and then I will look at the linked organisations, providing just a summary of the related findings.

9.3.1 The Soil Association

Q1: Intended impacts and roles of the organisations

The SA's most recent strategic plan, 'The Road to 20:20' (Soil Association 2011c), describes three strategic objectives, which appear to relate most strongly to the niche development and regime reform roles, but also to the normative contestation role, to a lesser degree. They are: (1) normalising sustainable food through institutional procurement, catering standards and partnerships with local authorities (regime reform); (2) stimulating activity in local communities and the grassroots through programmes of support for organic buying groups, CSAs and community land trusts (niche development); and (3) developing and disseminating organic and climate-friendly growing practices, through standards and certification, apprenticeships, research and development and lobbying (niche development, normative contestation and regime reform). Additionally, during interviews SA staff (SA1, SA2 and SA3) talked about realising their intended impacts by a variety of means, including: influencing government and mainstream businesses, driving consumer behaviour change, transforming institutions and communities, growing the organic movement and market, and developing and crafting models for the future. This multi-pronged approach, which includes the creation of alternative models (if not *systems*), demonstrates that their thinking spans all four roles, even if their activities don't do so directly.

Moreover, as was found in the previous two cases, different individuals understand and articulate the organisation's intended impacts in different ways. However, a couple of comments from interviews help to clarify a more fundamental goal of the organisation that may underpin these strategic objectives, i.e. to spread the production and consumption of organic food.

“Don’t forget – I mean it’s the – the end result is we want more people to be eating organic food and more farming to be organic because of the public good and personal benefit that will deliver. I mean that’s the [...] Well, it’s the only point of existing actually” (SA-4)

“We also want to support, initiate and drive useful research about wider food and sustainability issues that can be used to help better inform the wider debates being had at a policy level. So things like phosphorous and nitrates and carbon and anaerobic. But it’s fundamentally about arguing effectively that organic and similar production techniques are the only truly sustainable approach to producing sustainable food. And arguing about what the future of food and farming should look like and how we get there.” (SA-1)

Q2: Ends and means

In terms of the desired ‘ends’ and likely ‘means’ of a transition (analytically speaking), or as articulated by SA1 above, “what the future of food and farming should look like and how we get there”, I found that SA staff members are in broad agreement with each other and their organisation’s official line, at least in terms of the big picture. In essence, they believe that expanding the practice of organic and related agro-ecological farming methods is the best way to address future threats to sustainability, and that the SA is well placed to help make this the norm. As stressed by SA-2:

“We think organic is the best most commonly understood way that food can be produced sustainably and in a healthy way, in harmony with nature broadly, and to not put that at the top seems to be a failure of the imagination” (SA-2)

However, there is an additional aspect of their vision which came out only in interviews, i.e. that more sustainable future food systems will be localised around metropolitan areas and estates. This is a viewpoint that was expressed a number of times, but only by less senior project staff (SA-7 and SA-8), so may not be consistent with decisions being made at a strategic level. Moreover, only one senior member of SA staff made reference to the matter of scale, and did so in an ambivalent way. “I don’t think big is necessarily bad, it is how you behave [...] I think there is this issue of appropriateness of scale actually” (SA-1). The specific properties that are associated with more sustainable food systems within official SA documentation (i.e. enshrined in the organic production standards) are health, ecology, care and fairness. Two of these were reinforced by senior SA staff in interviews. First, ecology, which was interpreted narrowly as the use of natural measures to improve and maintain productivity (SA-4); and second, care, which was interpreted as a cultural outlook within which food is viewed as a vital element in human development and social care (SA-2).

When asked to explain what they think will be the most likely ‘means’ of a transition, SA staff members produced a variety of different views. Three of them suggested that it would be driven by (1) economic stresses to wider social systems. SA-4 suggested that “economic forces and the physical limits of our climate” will make a transition to chemical free farming “inevitable”, whereas SA-8, suggested that a transition will come about when we reach “a significant sort of crunch point in terms of fuel prices”. For SA-2, the transition towards sustainability will be gradual, but punctuated by multiple thresholds:

“We’ve done lots of campaign planning around-- where is it that the economics of this will change? When oil gets to 150 dollars a barrel and suddenly the cost of inputs change? In organic that is significant, because you’re using sprays, but where does it happen that you need to re-localise? This is where suddenly supermarket models become redundant. They’re not going to become redundant in 2015 when everybody buys things in a different way; it will transition much more gently than that.” (SA-2)

Other staff members suggested that a transition could be driven by (2) cross-sector partnerships to deliver behaviour change (SA-5), (3) government intervention, education and behaviour change (SA-6), and (4) a mix of grassroots action and government intervention (SA-7).

In summary, the SA's belief in organic and agro-ecological farming methods as the future for more sustainable food systems, its emphasis on ecology and care as key properties of those systems, alongside health, fairness and appropriateness of scale, present a relatively coherent vision of the desired outcome of a transition to sustainability. However, the varied viewpoints from its staff members concerning the likely drivers of a transition, and their different understandings of how the SA is going about realising its intended impacts on food systems, reveal that there is greater plurality of interpretation amongst the staff with regards to the question of "how we get there" (SA-1). As was shown above, official documentation that describes the means by which the SA seeks to drive change implies all four roles. This plurality of accounts is mirrored by the variety of strategic activities that the SA engages in, which are characteristic of three of the roles (niche development, normative contestation and regime reform).

9.3.2 The linked organisations

I have summarised my findings about the stated intentions of the five linked organisations in Table 18 (at the end of the chapter). In the rest of this section I will briefly discuss them.

Q1: Intended impacts and roles of the organisations

So, to what extent do the different organisations' intended impacts and 'perceived roles' within broad change processes correspond to the roles in the framework? Well, respondents from both Unicorn and Grow Com express their organisations' roles in terms that resonate with the grassroots innovation role, i.e. being a building block for a more sustainable food system (Unicorn) and creating a model for community-led trade (Grow Com). However, Grow Com's director also talked about the organisation helping others to

apply the model through their start-up programme, which is more related to the niche development role. Sustain's co-ordinator, on the other hand, perceives Sustain's role as being about generating pressure on private and public sectors by pulling together coalitions of concerned organisations, which corresponds to the normative contestation role. Likewise, CIWF's mission, as stated in official documentation, is to drive a global movement *against* factory farming, which also corresponds to the normative contestation role. On the contrary, the MSC's commercial officer described the organisation's role as being about driving consumer and industry behaviour change through the ecolabel, which corresponds to the regime reform role. And, as already stated above, the SA perceives itself as playing roles in wider change processes which span all four roles.

Informants from GO and the FEC, however, couch their organisations' roles in terms that do not relate easily to the framework, being neither exclusively niche-facing nor exclusively regime-facing, and implying none of the four roles specifically. The chief executive of GO expressed the organisation's role in terms of taking as many other organisations as possible with them on a journey towards a healthy and sustainable world, whereas the FEC's executive director expressed the organisation's role in terms of convening civil society, public and private sector actors in pursuit of a better, fairer and sustainable food system. Both of these views contain hints of the regime reform role, in terms of being concerned with convening different actors and driving change on a large-scale – as compared to the niche-based roles of grassroots innovation and niche development, which operate on smaller scales and do not often involve regime actors.

Q2: Ends and means

What degree of similarity and agreement is there between the properties that informants from the different organisations associate with sustainable food systems, and their theories of change? As with the networks of T&PH and the FD, there is considerable variability in terms of the properties that the informants associate with sustainable food systems (desired 'ends' of transition). However, the same concepts appear repeatedly across the group of organisations (see the fourth column from the left in Table 18 below),

many of them being commonly associated with sustainable development in a more general sense. Moreover, three properties in particular – (1) health, (2) social justice/equity and (3) environmental/ecological integrity – are common to most of the organisations. There is one noticeable exception though; the MSC's principles for sustainable seafood being couched in terms of good management practices and the desired properties that this should give rise to being couched in terms of ecosystems, rather than food systems (i.e. structure, productivity, function and diversity of ecosystems). This may be an indication of how considerably the socio-technical configurations of fisheries and the seafood industry differ from other (land-based) food systems.

As for the views of these informants about the key drivers of a transition to sustainability (likely 'means' of a transition), the most commonly-cited agencies were the following, in rough order of prominence: (1) grassroots action and beacon projects, (2) government intervention, (3) stress and shocks to the system, (4) education, training and behaviour change, and (5) political activism, campaigning and coalition-building. These categories are similar to those elicited from the networks of T&PH and the FD. And, as was true with the other two cases, there appears not to be any obvious pattern linking this factor to the organisations' intended impacts and perceived roles, nor to the sectors, regimes and movements that they position themselves with respect to. Hence, it may be that this factor is more down to personal attributes of the individuals themselves.

In summary, these are the main findings that have emerged from the above discussion about how the linked organisations relate to the roles and to transition. They situated their own organisations' strategies with respect to different systems over which they seek influence, including factory farming, food systems, the world economy and environment, the world's oceans, and the world as a whole. In general, though, these are broad frames of reference, indicating that they all have a sense of being engaged in large-scale, systemic change processes. In terms of how they view their organisations' roles with these processes, their accounts are varied and range across different scales of impact (from being the building blocks of a more sustainable future to driving global movements). For

most of the organisations these perceived roles correspond to the roles in the framework – although not without a level of ambiguity. Thus, through the lens of the RIT framework, all four roles are represented. However, two of the organisations expressed their roles in wider change processes in terms that do not relate as clearly to the roles in the framework.

As with the previous two cases, the theories of change offered by the different organisations seem not to relate in a straightforward or obvious way to their intended impacts or perceived roles. However, they are similar to the theories offered by organisations in the other networks (of T&PH and the FD). And although there is a degree of variability between the properties associated with sustainable food by the different organisations, there is also a large degree of similarity. Almost all mention the properties of environmental/ecological integrity, social justice/equity, and health, which correspond closely to ‘the Brundtland triad’ of environmental integrity, social equity and personal wellbeing (Stirling Forthcoming), and three out of four of the SA’s own principles of health, ecology, and fairness (care being the fourth).

--

Having come to the end of this chapter, which is the final of my three case studies, I will now move on to the penultimate chapter in this thesis, the discussion chapter.

Table 16. Comparing (1) the sites and specifics of embedding the SA's Organic production standards and FFL catering mark within regime contexts, and (2) the negotiations involved

	Soil Association Organic production standards	Food for Life catering mark
	<i>(1) Sites and specifics of embedding</i>	
Part of incumbent food regime that it applies to	Horticulture, agriculture, aquaculture, livestock markets, abattoirs and slaughtering, food processing and packaging, distribution, retail and catering (including importation)	Public sector catering (e.g. schools, universities, care homes and hospitals) and food service industry (e.g. private restaurants and workplace canteens).
Technical criteria making up the standard	Organic standards for agricultural, environmental, food processing and social practices, as laid out in the Soil Association's standard documents	Criteria about the quality of the food and the service, existing statutory regulations (e.g. for food hygiene), the UK Government's free range standards for meat, the MSC and MCS's standards for fisheries, the RSPCA's Freedom Food standards for meat and farmed fish, FLO-accredited fair-trade standards, and the LEAF standard
Other embedded values	Trust, integrity, connection, knowledge	Reassurance/endorsement, knowledge
Control/ownership	The SA, representing the organic movement	The SA and the other standards bodies, i.e. the MSC, MCS, RSPCA, FLO and LEAF, representing the wider sustainable food movement

	Soil Association Organic production standards	Food for Life catering mark
	<i>(2) Negotiations involved in embedding</i>	
<i>Selection</i>	The SA has run public campaigns and released statements to the media that propose organic products/practices as solutions to regime problems, e.g. 'Cottoned On' and response to horse meat scandal.	In their communications about the FFL catering mark, the SA has emphasised (1) the entitlements of children and the public sector's obligations of care towards service users, and (2) the potential cost savings, competitiveness and risk avoidance for private businesses.
<i>Implementation</i>	The SA's Producer Support team, the Duchy Originals Future Farming programme, Crofting Connections and the Organic Food Awards encourage producers to compete and strive for higher standards, and resolve technical issues in organic production.	FFL catering mark's bronze-silver-gold categories stimulate competition between local authorities and the FFLP staff are looking for ways to resolve technical mismatches with established practices and infrastructures, for instance by stimulating product development and collaboration across the supply chain.
<i>Regulation</i>	The SA has gone beyond the usual regulations of inspection, certification and accreditation by introducing extra measures to ensure supply chain integrity. It has also sought to influence legal regulations to bring them in line with the SA's own standards.	The FFL catering mark encompasses statutory regulations for food service and is recommended by Defra in the Government Buying Standards. The SA endorses its own brand as a reputable standard setter and certifier in connection to the catering mark.
<i>Enrolment</i>	Through the AssureWel Project, the SA is influencing the development of other UK and European farm assurance schemes.	The FFLP has developed a commissionable model for public sector clients which seeks to institutionalise the catering mark's standards by developing capabilities within the client organisations.

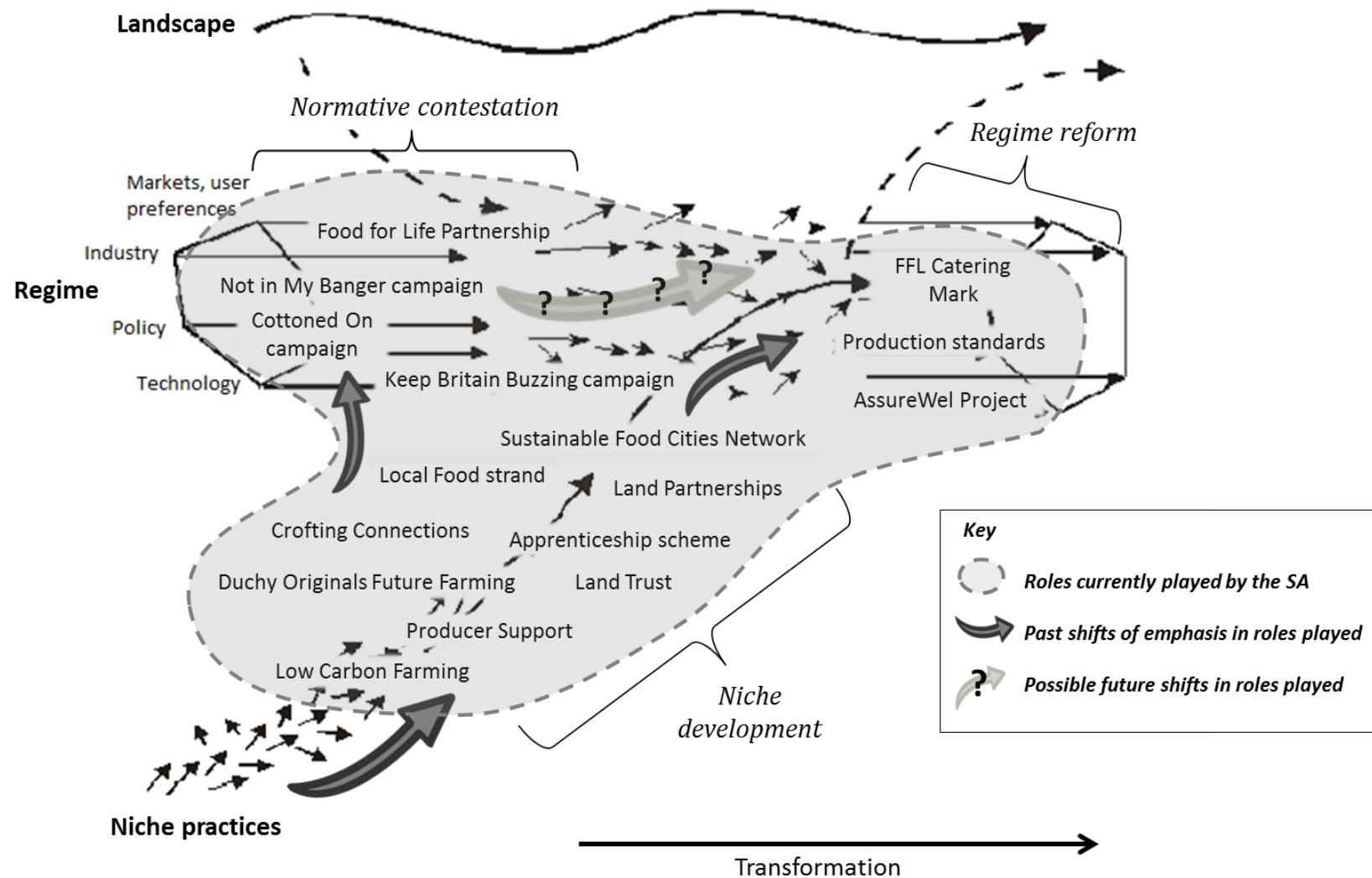


Figure 25. 'Map' of the roles currently played by the SA in transitions (text within shaded area), and the shifting positions adopted by the organisation over time, with respect to these roles (shaded arrows). Diagram adapted from Geels (2002).

Table 17. Activities carried out by the CSOs in the SA's network, under the headings of the four roles in transition

CSO/Role	Grassroots innovation	Niche development	Normative contestation	Regime reform
Unicorn	Co-operative wholefood retail operation Moss Brook Growers CSA	Grow a Grocery	Campaigning against supermarket development	
Grow-Com	Organic box scheme Farmers' market Urban market gardens Peri-urban farm Patchwork Farm (nine urban food-growing micro-sites)	Start-up Programme Education and training for volunteers	Manifesto	
GO		Advice for organic gardeners Organic Gardening Guidelines Research and dissemination International development projects Master Gardeners project	Demonstration gardens, visitor centre and seed library Food for Life Partnership	
SA		Producer Support Local Food strand Duchy Originals Future Farming Low Carbon Farming Crofting Connections Apprenticeship scheme Land Trust Land Partnerships Sustainable Food Cities Network	Keep Britain Buzzing campaign Cottoned On campaign Food for Life Partnership Not In My Banger campaign	Food for Life Catering Mark AssureWel Project Production standards
Sustain		Network-building Convening and facilitating sub-alliances Research and dissemination Guidance and technical assistance	Lobbying for legislative change Provision of evidence for policy making Championing 'good' businesses Naming and shaming 'bad' biz	Co-development of sustainable food procurement rules (e.g. London Olympics in 2012)

		Knowledge transfer	Educational campaigns Influencing public debates	
FEC			Business Forum Deliberative workshops Tools for decision-making Publications	
CIWF			Lobbying the European Government, intergovernmental agencies and food companies Providing guidance and advice to consumers Supporting/promoting producers	
MSC			Promoting the MSC label to consumers Fish for Kids project Promoting sustainable fishing policies and practices to fisheries and food business	Development, maintenance and licensing of MSC standard/label

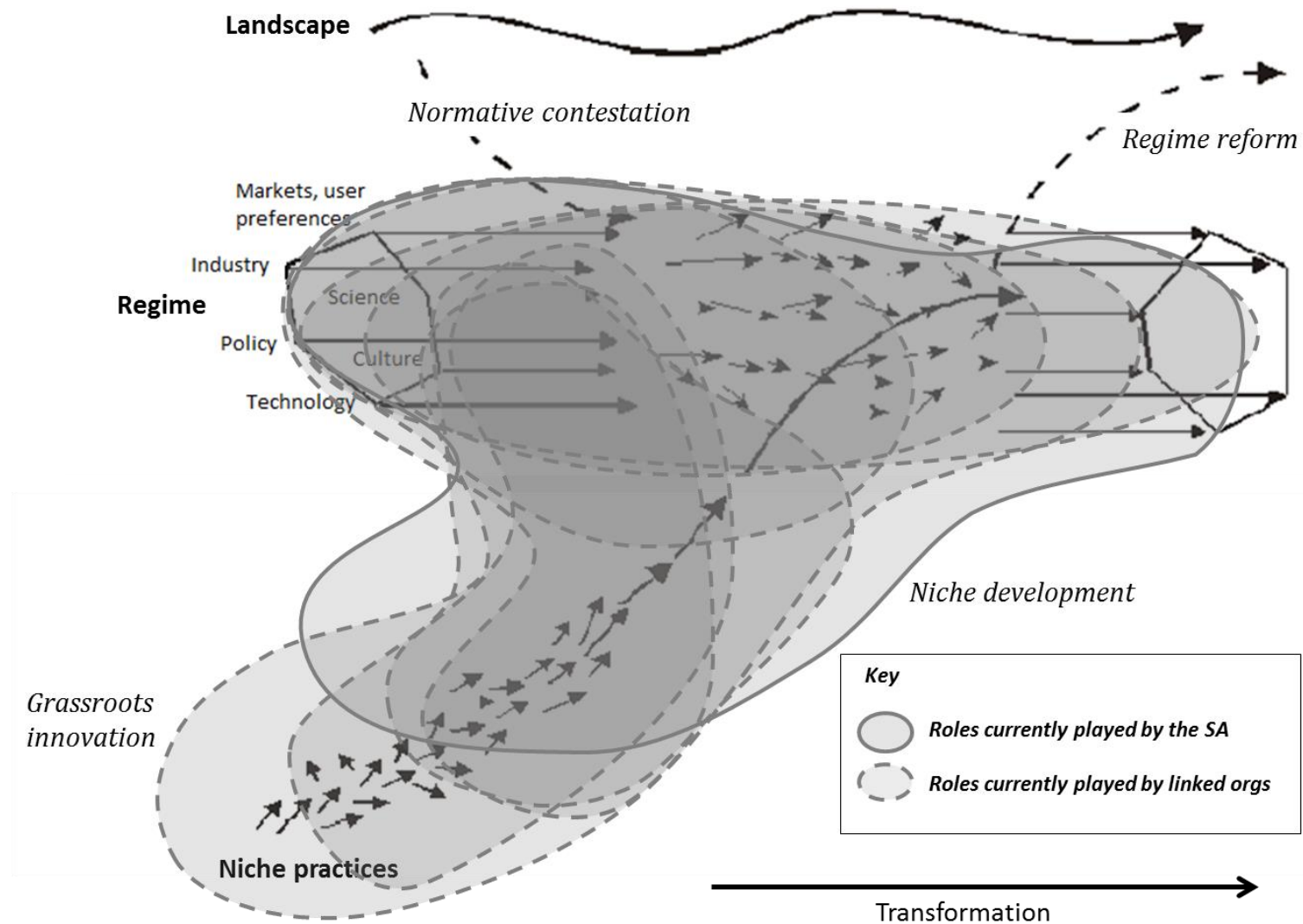


Figure 26. 'Map' of the roles currently played in transitions by the SA (shaded area with solid outline) and five other CSOs that it works in association with (shaded areas with broken outlines). Diagram adapted from Geels (2002).

Table 18. Intended impacts of the six organisations and related views held by some of their members

CSO/ Intentions	Intended impacts of the organisation	Visions of the future and perceived roles of the organisation	Key properties associated with sustainable food systems	Theory of change (key drivers of a transition to sustainability)
Unicorn	To create secure employment, enable access to wholesome, healthy food, and support a sustainable world environment and economy	Small scale, independent, co-operative businesses like Unicorn are the building blocks of a more sustainable food system	Trade equity, affordability and fair pay Environmental integrity	Local, grassroots projects driving consumer demand Economic stress to the system
Grow-Com	To create sustainable, resilient food systems through community-led trade	Grow Com is creating a model of community-led trade and helping others to apply the community-led trade model in their own circumstances so that eventually we might have different scales of retail operation interacting and connecting with different scales of farming operation	Organic, agroecology Appropriate scale Local, seasonal, fresh/minimally processed, mainly plant-based food Fair trade Low-carbon, environmentally friendly Knowledge, trust, community	Grassroots projects creating alternatives, pulling together with campaigns to influence policy
GO	To get more people growing organically and catalyse pro-environmental behaviour change	Grow Com works in a principled way, with as many partners as possible , on a journey towards a healthy and sustainable world that has embraced organic growing	Economically viable, mainstream, resilient Environmentally and ethically appropriate Shared ownership	Government intervention/national legislative change to education
SA	To spread the production and consumption of organic food	Organic farming is the best way to address future threats to sustainability The SA is well placed to help make Organic and similar techniques the norm	Organic principles, i.e. health, ecology, care, fairness Organic, i.e. chemical-free Appropriate scale Culture of care	Economic stress to the system Government intervention, education and behaviour change Grassroots action and government intervention Behaviour change and cross-sector partnerships

Sustain	To persuade the public and private sectors to change their food and farming policies so that they support sustainable development	Sustain will generate pressure on the public and private sectors until we have a sustainable food system Sustain works in an opportunistic way, pulling together coalitions of concern at specific moments	Minimal negative externalities Locally-based and seasonal Health-giving Equity/mutuality Diversity	Local, grassroots action and empowerment combined with system-level change in policies
FEC	To educate the public about ethical issues in food and agriculture, by catalysing dialogue for progress on tricky issues	The FEC aims to convene civil society, public and private sector actors so that they can work together in pursuit of a better, fairer and sustainable food system	Social justice Ecological sustainability Health	External stresses and/or shocks to the system
CIWF	To end factory farming and advance the wellbeing of farm animals worldwide	CIWF aims to drive a global movement against factory farming – as part of a wider movement towards humane and sustainable farming	High welfare Safe, high quality and affordable food Protection for wildlife, the climate, the countryside and rural livelihoods Food security and Sustainability – ensuring our ability to provide food for all in the future Social Equity/fair prices	Intervention from governments and global institutions, driven by pressure from a broad coalition of NGOs
MSC	To contribute to the health of the world's oceans and transform the seafood market to a sustainable basis	The MSC aims to drive consumer and industry behaviour change in a neutral, transparent and accountable manner such that, in the future, the world's oceans are teeming with life	Good management, i.e. resources are not overexploited and the structure, productivity, function and diversity of ecosystems are protected	Political pressure from the bottom-up driving practical change from the top-down

CHAPTER 10. Discussion

In this thesis my central purpose has been to improve understanding of how civil society actors seek to drive change towards sustainability in food systems. In striving to answer this general question, I have followed existing scholarship from the field of sustainability transitions in a number of ways. First, regarding civil society actors, I have argued that their most significant contributions cannot be understood in terms of magnitude (e.g. by measuring the tonnage of more sustainable food produced/consumed, or acreage in production), nor can they be expected to follow a linear trend of regular additions. Rather, I have sought to understand the contributions of civil society actors towards the transformation of existing patterns of production and consumption to more sustainable modes in the light of their contributions to *systemic innovation*, which transitions theory characterises in terms of complex, non-linear processes involving multiple dimensions of change. Second, I have argued that alternative food systems are (1) largely created and developed by civil society actors operating on the fringes of mainstream food systems and (2) provide a vital source of more sustainable values and practices, as well as both critical and constructive feedback on mainstream food systems. And third, I have argued that the transfer of innovations from the margins to the mainstream does not follow an incremental trend line; rather, the processes of contestation and translation involved produce non-linear, often recursive, patterns of change.

Given these theoretical premises, I made certain methodological choices in the design of this study. I chose to focus on organised groups within civil society, or Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), as the principal subjects of my research. I chose to investigate three classes of phenomena associated with CSOs: their relationships with each other, their strategic activities, and their espoused intentions. I chose a tripartite case study design that enabled me to analyse and compare these phenomena at different levels of structure (intra-, inter- and super-organisational), and to empirically test existing scholarly ideas concerning the distinguishable roles played by civil society actors within sustainability

transitions. And I chose to use a range of different tools and techniques for identifying, selecting, collating, analysing, interpreting and representing my case materials. Thus, through this study I have done my best to confront my own theoretical assumptions with evidence of the roles played by specific civil society actors, as they are constructed through practice and self-defined in both formal and informal discourse.

In this chapter I will compare and interpret my empirical findings from across the three cases with respect to the three research questions that I set up in CHAPTER 4, i.e.:

1. What are the distinguishable kinds of roles that civil society actors play in their attempts to drive change towards sustainability in food systems?
2. How do individual civil society organisations (CSOs), parts of CSOs, and associations of multiple CSOs relate to these roles, and to each other, concurrently and over time?
3. How do these roles relate to the stated intentions of key-actors within CSOs?

In answering the first of these questions I will adopt a *systems-level view*, asking what makes the four roles distinguishable; in answering the second question I will adopt an *actor-level view*, comparing specific enactments of the roles by individual CSOs; and in answering the third question, I will interrogate the views espoused by the actors themselves, as they are constructed in formal and informal discourse, and compare them to the abstract roles. Thus, through sequentially adopting these three distinct approaches, I will strive to produce an improved understanding of the roles that civil society actors play in their attempts to drive change.

In the next and final chapter (0) I will draw all my findings together and relate them to the three main scholarly literatures that I used in the conceptualisation and design of this study, i.e. the Sustainability Transitions, Alternative Food Networks and Civil Society literatures. I will also evaluate my efforts to answer the above questions, highlight the most significant contributions of my research, and identify avenues for further research.

10.1 Distinguishable roles: a systems view

My review of existing scholarly literatures suggested that there are principally four roles that CSOs can play in transitions. (1) Grassroots innovation: CSOs experiment, in the protective spaces of civil society niches, with novel, more sustainable configurations of food provisioning that respond to local situations and the interests and values of the communities involved. (2) Niche development: CSOs facilitate learning and capacity-building around grassroots innovations, thus aiding the strategic development (including up-scaling and replication) of alternative systems of food provision. (3) Normative contestation: CSOs apply normative pressure to the public, policy-makers and food industry, which undermines existing unsustainable practices and shifts favour towards alternative systems – thereby destabilising incumbent food regimes. (4) Regime reform: CSOs encourage regime actors, including mainstream businesses and public bodies, to adopt and embed more sustainable configurations of technologies, practices and organisational arrangements, thus leading to the reform and re-orientation of incumbent food regimes. I have called this typology the roles-in-transition (RIT) framework.

From amongst the action repertoires of the organisations in my three cases I identified activities that typify each of the roles in the framework (see CHAPTER 7 CHAPTER 8 and CHAPTER 9). I also demonstrated in detail the kinds of techniques and technologies, relationships with other CSOs and state and market actors, and styles of governance and management that are involved in the performance of these roles. In the rest of this section I will look across the three cases in an attempt to characterise the roles using all the evidence available (see Table 26 at the end of the chapter and sections 10.1.1 to 10.1.4). I will sum up by stating what, under this view, actually makes the roles distinguishable (section 10.1.5).

10.1.1 Grassroots innovation

According to Seyfang and Smith (2007), grassroots innovation is about experimentation, in the protective spaces of civil society niches, with novel, more sustainable configurations of food provisioning that respond to local situations and the interests and values of the

communities involved. But what does this look like in practice? Which of the specific technical, social and cognitive practices performed by the organisations in my three cases correspond to this definition?

Table 19. Grassroots innovation: Elements, i.e. what is being practised? Activities, i.e. how is it being practised? Actors, i.e. who is practising it?

Elements	Activities	Actors
Production	Biodynamic/organic/low-carbon agri-/horticulture, aquaponics, farm diversification, and growing trials for novel crops	Organisations (T&PH, BDAC, M-CAN, FD)
	Peri-urban farming, urban market gardening, and food-growing on urban micro-sites	Organisations (Grow-Com)
	Communal growing in gardens, allotments and orchards	Individuals (members of FD, GK and TFR)
	Garden-sharing and seed swapping amongst individuals	Individuals (members of TFR)
Marketing, distribution and retail	Direct marketing through farm shops, box schemes and farmers' markets	Organisations (T&PH, Grow-Com)
	Co-operative retail operations and organic buying groups	Organisations (Unicorn) Households (members of SA-supported OBGs)
Consumption	Local diet challenge, community dining events	Households and individuals (FD members)
	Food waste collection and composting	Organisations (M-CAN)
Social/organisational practices	Community consultation	Organisations (FD)
	Communal ownership by shares	Individuals (members of T&PH and BDLT)
	Co-operative governance	Organisations (T&PH, BDLT, Unicorn)
	Care-farming	Organisations (T&PH)
Cognitive practices	Anthroposophy	Individuals (members and staff of T&PH and BDAC)

As demonstrated in CHAPTER 7, CHAPTER 8 and CHAPTER 9, I have found a broad range of activities that fulfil the criteria. These activities include practices of food production, marketing, distribution, retail and consumption, as well as related social/organisational and cognitive practices (see Table 19 below). This contrasts with previous research, which has focussed on food production in relation to civil society niches (Smith 2006, Elzen, Geels et al. 2011, Hassink, Grin et al. 2013, Kirwan, Ilbery et al. 2013). As such, it reinforces an important point about the interconnections between all parts of food systems – which was a separate premise underlying the conception of this research – and shows how that is reflected in the practices of civil society actors (as suggested by Renting, Schermer et al. 2012).

Another important issue addressed by the evidence from across the four cases is that of who precisely is carrying out these food-related practices? Though all of these activities are conducted under the auspices of specific organisations, my research has shown that it is often individual members and households that are enrolled by the organisations to carry them out (again, see Table 19 below). This raises questions about how certain innovative activities and actors are instrumentalised by others and highlights a need for transitions scholars to look closely at how organisations are bounded and constituted, rather than relying on the analytical label of ‘local projects’ to indicate the locus of niche innovation (Geels and Raven 2006, Raven, Heiskanen et al. 2008).

10.1.2 Niche development

According to the theory, niche development is about the facilitation of learning and capacity-building around grassroots innovations, thus aiding the strategic development (including up-scaling and replication) of alternative systems of food provision (Geels and Deuten 2006, Schot and Geels 2008, Hargreaves, Hielscher et al. 2013). In practice, I have found that this entails performing a range of activities that represent different ways of facilitating knowledge development and the development of networks and infrastructures (see Table 20 below). This finding largely supports the spirit of previous studies and conceptualisations of niche development processes.

Table 20. Niche development: Elements, i.e. what is being developed? Activities, i.e. how is it being developed? Actors, i.e. who is it developed for (users/beneficiaries)?

Elements	Activities	Actors
Knowledge	Accredited horticultural and agricultural training programmes	Individuals (students of the BDAC)
	Un-accredited cooking and growing workshops/courses	Individuals (members of the FD, GK, Grow-Com and GO)
	Apprenticeship schemes and volunteer and staff development programmes	Individuals (apprentices of T&PH, BDA and SA)
	Commissioning research, collating case studies, co-ordinating trials and running breeding programmes	Organisations (new OBGs, food co-ops, CSAs, box schemes and local diet challenges), households and individuals (members of the BDA, TFR, FD, GK, NS, GO, Sustain and SA), farmers (licensees of the BDA and SA)
	Providing guidance and technical assistance through helplines, online and printed resources (including toolkits and how-to guides), knowledge transfer programmes (peer-to-peer and expert-led), and formal standards/guidelines	
Networks and infrastructures	Operating formal members' networks (place-based and nationwide) using online networking platforms, e-zines and network-building events	Households, individuals, farmers, organisations (members of the SFC and CSA-UK networks, the BDA, TFR, FD, NS, Sustain, SA, GO, FEC, and CIWF)
	Facilitating practical partnerships between network members, and networking local supply bases	Organisations, individuals (members of Sustain and the FFLP, supplier members of the FFL catering mark, MSC certified fisheries, Unicorn suppliers)
	Securing land tenure at below-market rates, start-up funding and specialist inputs	Organisations, individuals (SA and BDA apprentices, new entrants to farming, new CSAs and box schemes)
	Holding community planning processes and pulling together funding bids	Organisations (new community food initiatives)

Moreover, in answer to the question of for whom this is being developed, my research shows that a number of different user groups are targeted by the various different activities. In my three cases, students, apprentices, signed-up members, members of staff, households, farmers/farm businesses and other CSOs have been the users and beneficiaries of niche development activities. Thus, my research adds to previous work that draws attention to the diverse categories of actors that are engaged in grassroots innovation and niche development processes through their involvement in local projects (e.g. Kemp, Schot et al. 1998). It also shows that they come together in ways that eschew easy analytical hierarchies such as implied by the levels of the MLP, suggesting that analytical categories derived from this approach (such as ‘local project’, ‘intermediary’, ‘global niche’ and so on) should be treated openly and not expected to correspond to specific categories of actors.

10.1.3 Normative contestation

According to Elzen et al. (2011), normative contestation is about the application of discursive and symbolic pressure to the public, policy-makers and food industries, which undermines existing unsustainable practices and shifts favour towards alternative systems – thereby destabilising incumbent food regimes. In practice, many of the organisations in my study have performed this role, doing so through a variety of activities targeted at the public and policymakers. Though the majority of these activities, if successful in achieving their aims, would have the effect of applying pressure to the incumbent industry, they have not been directly targeted at industrial actors. Instead, they have targeted (1) members of the public, on account of their food consumption behaviours, food-related political activity and voluntary participation in food systems, and (2) politically influential individuals and organisations, on account of their decision-making duties and obligations to deliver policies (see Table 21 below). This finding accords with two previous studies of regime destabilisation, which showed that the most effective drivers of change within incumbent industries tend to be (1) shifts in consumer preferences which disfavour incumbent products and services, and (2) changes in legislation which have the effect of penalising them (Penna and Geels 2012, Turnheim and Geels 2012).

Table 21. Normative contestation: Elements, i.e. what is being contested? Activities, i.e. how is it being contested? Actors, i.e. targeting whom?

Elements	Activities	Actors
Cultural values, social norms and identities cf. food consumption, politics and voluntary action	Promoting alternatives, undermining incumbent businesses/practices and mobilising support for campaigns through attention-grabbing stunts, story-telling, celebrity patronage, e-zines and online petitions; Providing information, guidance and advice to consumers in food outlets	Individuals (members of the public as citizens and consumers, and supporters of TFR, SA, FD, GK, M-CAN, NS, Sustain, WWF-UK, Unicorn, Grow-Com, GO, Sustain, CIWF and MSC)
	Encouraging participation in and identification with alternatives through education and re-skilling	
Political frameworks and policies	Influencing policy-making processes by hosting policy development platforms and producing tools to aid decision-making	Individuals (policymakers, opinion-formers) and organisations (Government departments, political agencies and think tanks)
	Advocating specific policy changes by publishing reports and political manifestos, giving public talks and media interviews, issuing press releases, responding to consultations, submitting evidence for planning procedures and lobbying politicians	

10.1.4 Regime reform

According to Smith (2006, 2007), regime reform is about encouraging regime actors, including mainstream businesses and public bodies, to adopt and embed more sustainable configurations of technologies, practices and organisational arrangements, thus leading to the reform and re-orientation of incumbent food regimes. In practice, several of the organisations in my study embody this role. As I have shown in CHAPTER 7, CHAPTER 8 and CHAPTER 9, they do so through various activities which have the effect of renegotiating the evaluative criteria of incumbent industries and institutions – altering regime contexts so that alternative, more sustainable practices can compete with

incumbent practices (see Table 22 below). My research shows that CSOs are capable of instigating reforms that *oblige* institutional actors to make more sustainable procurement choices and businesses to meet higher standards of sustainability. But my case work has also shown that the reforms driven by CSOs enable *demand-driven* changes – i.e. shifting consumer preferences, EU targets for public bodies – to manifest, by providing the necessary trust and consensus across supply chains, as well as logistical solutions and infrastructures, to make the supply of more sustainable products and services to mass markets and user groups possible.

Table 22. Regime reform: Elements, i.e. what is being reformed? Activities, i.e. how is it being reformed? Actors, i.e. who is affected by the reforms?

Elements	Activities	Actors
Evaluative criteria of incumbent industries	Certification and labelling of products, outlets and supply chains using alternative standards and assurance schemes	Individuals (farmers, business leaders, entrepreneurs), organisations (retailers, commercial standard-setters, industry bodies)
	Incorporation of alternative assessment systems into commercial standards	
	Building trust and consensus to enable coordinated action across supply chains and between localities	
Evaluative criteria of incumbent institutions	Incorporation of alternative criteria into procurement rules for public sector institutions and major public events	Individuals (policymakers, civil servants) and organisations (Government departments and agencies, local authorities and institutions)
	Delivering commissionable service packages (including food service, education, business development, and so on) for local authorities so they can meet their health and wellbeing obligations	

Moreover, in one of my detailed case studies (CHAPTER 9) I identified four different kinds of negotiations that a single organisation (the SA) entered into in order to bring about these reforms. These included negotiations about (1) the selection of sustainable innovations, (2) their implementation, (3) regulating them, and (4) the enrolment of regime actors into processes of reform. These findings complement and extend existing

scholarship on civil society agency in regime reform processes, which has not yet produced detailed studies of the interactions between civil society actors and regime incumbents.

10.1.5 Summary

In the above section I have assumed that the roles in the RIT framework are objective processes that civil society actors perform in their attempts to drive change towards sustainability in food systems, each being distinguished from the other by the specific elements in the system through which they seek to bring about transformation and the specific actors involved (see Figure 27 below).

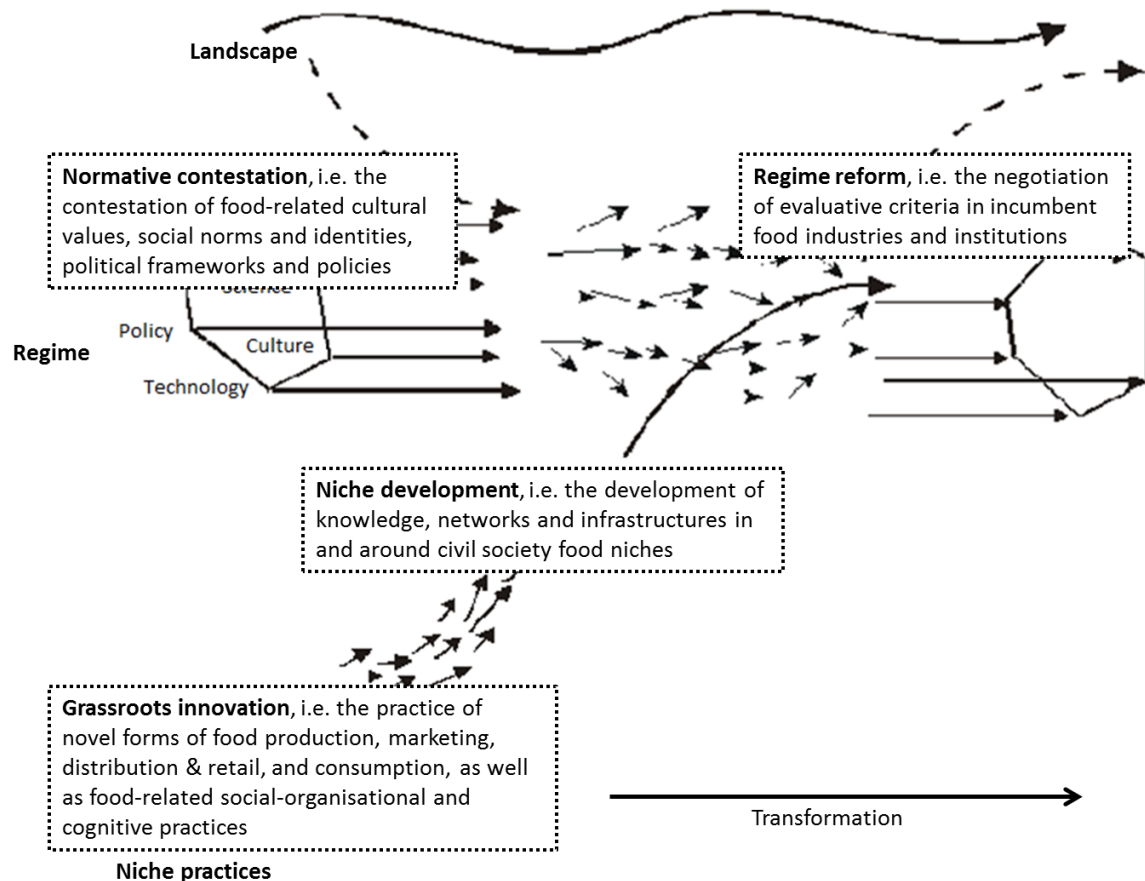


Figure 27. Civil society roles in transition as performed by UK-based CSOs in their attempts to drive change towards sustainability in food systems

By using evidence from across my cases to characterise the roles in this way, I have shown that these factors (elements and actors) vary in ways that contrast with some of the evidence from existing scholarship. First, I found that grassroots innovation can be enacted through a variety of practices, potentially concerning all parts of food systems *in addition to food production, which has been the focus of previous scholarship on food system transitions*. Second, I found that the categories of actors carrying out practices associated with grassroots innovation – as well as those using and benefitting from niche development activities – include many different types (in addition to ‘local projects’), and that they come together in ways that eschew easy analytical hierarchies such as implied by the levels of the MLP. As I explained, this highlights a need for transitions scholars to look closely at how local projects are bounded and constituted and how certain innovative activities and actors may be instrumentalised by others.

I have also shown how my findings complement and extend existing scholarship. First, I found that the elements of food systems through which the organisations in my study enacted processes of niche development – i.e. knowledge, networks and infrastructures – correspond closely with evidence from existing scholarship. Second, I found that the organisations enacting processes of normative contestation targeted their activities at the public and policymakers, instead of directly targeting industrial actors. This complements evidence from existing scholarship which has suggested that shifting consumer preferences and legislative change are the most effective drivers of industrial transformation. Third, I found evidence of organisations enacting processes of regime reform in both industrial and institutional contexts, by negotiating reforms to statutory and competitive criteria alike – i.e. encouraging firms and public bodies to adopt more sustainable practices either by obligation or by choice. The specific mechanisms that make these reforms effective were explored in depth in CHAPTER 9, and represent a novel extension of emerging scholarship on regime reform.

Table 23 below summarises the elements of an improved understanding of the roles that civil society actors play in their attempts to drive change, as derived from my findings.

Table 23. Improved understanding of civil society roles in transition

Orientation	Role	Elements targeted	Actors involved
Niche	Grassroots innovation	Food production, marketing, distribution and retail, and consumption, as well as food-related social-organisational and cognitive practices (within niches)	Members (individuals and households), CSOs themselves
	Niche development	Knowledge, networks and infrastructures (within niches)	Members (individuals, households and other CSOs), students, apprentices, staff, licensees (farmers and food businesses)
Incumbent regime	Normative contestation	Cultural values, social norms and identities, political frameworks and policies	Citizens, consumers, campaign supporters, policymakers, politically-influential individuals and organisations
	Regime reform	Evaluative criteria and practices of incumbent industries and institutions	Business leaders, entrepreneurs, firms, industry bodies, policymakers, civil servants, government departments, local authorities and public institutions

10.2 Enacting the roles: an actor level view

As I will go on to demonstrate throughout this section, evidence from across my three case studies suggests that CSOs from within the UK food and farming sub-sector of civil society enact these roles in a multitude of different ways that do not necessarily fall into one-to-one mappings (of actors to roles) or predictable sequences (from role to role). In fact, individual organisations in my three case studies tended to (1) enact different combinations of roles simultaneously, (2) form complex divisions of labour by enacting complementary roles, and (3) chart unique transformative pathways by shifting from role to role in response to internal and external developments over time. As well as reflecting

the mutually co-constitutive character of the four roles, which must be seen as component parts of the larger whole ('transition'), these findings also highlight specific properties of civil society that are crucial to understanding CSO agency in transitions, i.e. multivalency, relational complexity and dynamism. Furthermore, as I will show below, I have found that the multivalency and dynamism of CSOs can give rise to specific synergies and tensions in their activities – and that organisations can develop strategies for managing the roles in ways that minimise conflict between them and maximise symbiosis. In addition, my findings show that, by virtue of their diversity and complex interrelationships, CSOs can mobilise a variety of resources on each other's behalf, potentially reinforcing their collective impacts on food systems.

10.2.1 Multivalency

Evidence from across my three case studies suggests that individual CSOs from within the food and farming sub-sector of UK civil society do not tend to specialise in specific roles. Rather, as I showed in CHAPTER 7, CHAPTER 8 and CHAPTER 9, they adopt multivalent strategies that encompass multiple roles. This discovery questions previous empirical research into UK-based CSOs that work on food and farming (Food Ethics Council 2011), which led me to expect that particular CSOs might focus more exclusively on specific roles. However, it accords with scholarly research on the nature of non-profit organisations (NPOs), which suggests that they are made up of multiple internal components and governed with respect to "multiple bottom lines", or assessment criteria (Anheier 2000). The SA case study illustrates this multivalency especially vividly, though it is a property held in common by all three case organisations. Moreover, as the analysis in those chapters also shows, the majority of the other 15 organisations in the study enact combinations of different roles simultaneously.

As remarked above, I found that performing multiple roles simultaneously – i.e. multivalency – can lead to specific synergies and tensions for individual CSOs. Of my three case organisations, the extent to which they are either multivalent in the roles that they perform, or more focussed on one role, varies from one to the other – as does the extent

of synergy and tension arising from their associated activities. T&PH is the most focussed on one role, whereas the FD is the most multivalent, or generalist, and the SA is intermediate – but still strongly multivalent.

In the case of T&PH, staff perceived there to be tensions between the core values and practices associated with the organisation's focal role, grassroots innovation, and the kinds of values and practices associated with normative contestation (i.e. biodynamic farming, and anthroposophy in particular, were seen to be at odds with public campaigning and lobbying, see 0, section 7.1.1.3). Hence, T&PH doesn't engage directly in the latter. However, the niche development-related activities that T&PH carries out are clearly synergistic with many of those associated with grassroots innovation. For instance, the farm often recruits staff from amongst the students and apprentices that it trains, and staff members consider that education is central to anthroposophy. Moreover, by bringing students and apprentices onto the farm, T&PH expresses an open and inclusive attitude to outsiders that is important to its identity as a community farm.

In the case of the FD, which enacts all four roles to varying degrees, there are numerous synergies between the activities associated with them. For instance, many of the organisation's niche development and normative contestation related activities have the direct effect of facilitating FD practices that are related to grassroots innovation – with the 80:20 challenge (i.e. the challenge for members to eat a diet made up of 80% locally-sourced food) being the central practice that all others together are designed to enable. However, being a 'generalist', i.e. performing elements of all the roles, could also mean being spread a little thinly. Commenting about the great variety of activities the FD carried out in 2011, FD-4 commented that, "I think last year it was-- it wasn't disparate, but it was-- we could have linked in a lot more. So that's one of the aims this year" (FD-4). Nonetheless, the FD differs from the other two case organisations in being relatively young, so this apparent lack of connection between different activities may turn out to be fleeting.

In the case of the SA there are also strong synergies associated with performing multiple roles. The SA's campaigning and lobbying work (normative contestation) supports their niche development and regime reform related activities. For instance, by campaigning to influence consumer behaviours (e.g. through the Keep Britain Buzzing and Cottoned On campaigns) the SA helps to grow the market for organic produce, thereby encouraging development of the organic farming niche. Moreover, by raising awareness and applying pressure to business and policymakers (e.g. the FFLP and the NIMB campaigns), the SA enables its own reform work (e.g. embodied in the catering mark and AssureWel projects).

However, by enacting these three roles in the way that it does, the SA also creates significant tensions. This is encapsulated in the distinction between *charitable values associated with the public benefit*, which are emphasised in the SA's performance of the normative contestation role, and *commercial values associated with private benefit*, which come into play when the SA adopts the niche development and regime reforming roles. SA staff members and staff of the other CSOs in the SA's network alike (including FEC, CIWF and Sustain) all recognised this as a source of tension and, at times, antagonism. Though both of the identities (i.e. campaigning charity and trade association) fall into the category of civil society, they clearly represent quite different interests (consumers versus producers) that often come into conflict. This example highlights the slipperiness of such categories (also market, producer, consumer etc.) and illustrates how activities can spill over or change from one to another.

In summary, I have highlighted a few important implications of multivalency and, on the flipside, specialisation, for my three case organisations. By focussing on values and practices associated with the grassroots innovation role, and only enacting niche development-related activities that are synergistic with those values and practices, T&PH favours integrity and coherence, eschewing regime-oriented activities that could generate influence more broadly. The FD, on the other hand, enacts all the roles simultaneously, generating numerous synergies – but at the possible risk of being fragmentary. The SA, however, also generates strong synergies through simultaneously enacting multiple roles, but is accused of embodying a conflict of interests.

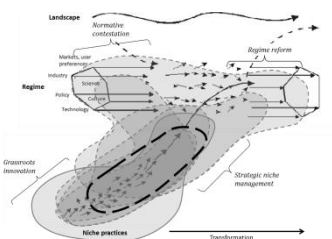
10.2.2 Relational complexity

Evidence from across my three case studies suggests that individual CSOs from within the food and farming sub-sector of civil society tend to have a variety of different kinds of relationships with other CSOs, resulting in a complex and dynamic patterning of networks. These relationships between CSOs – which may coincide with mutual engagement in a policy/issue field, identification with specific social movements, and/or co-habitation in particular places – can be mutually supportive, antagonistic or asymmetrically beneficial. Moreover, they are not limited to the kinds of relationships that are described in the existing literature and suggested by the RIT framework. Whereas transitions scholars have highlighted complementarities between the four roles (Seyfang and Smith 2007, Elzen, Geels et al. 2011), they have not explored the kinds of synergies that can exist between organisations playing the same roles. Nor have they paid so much attention to antagonisms that can also arise from interactions between organisations adopting these roles.

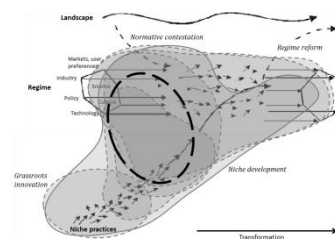
As I have shown in CHAPTER 7, CHAPTER 8 and CHAPTER 9, my three case organisations are similar in that they all have working relationships with other CSOs that enact different roles. In fact, each of their networks includes at least one organisation that enacts each of the four roles, resulting in an apparent division of labour between them (see Figure 28 below which shows them side-by-side). As I documented within each case study, the relationships between the three case organisations and the other CSOs in their networks are all underpinned by some degree of mutual benefit. Though this finding suggests that synergies between organisations enacting the four roles exist, in itself it cannot prove that they are a result of the complementarities suggested by scholars of sustainability transitions (see CHAPTER 4, section 4.3 and Figure 11). In fact, when explaining the relationships between these organisations, interviewees in my study focussed on the exchange of resources, rather than complementarities associated with their collective capacity to drive change in food systems. Hence, if synergies between the organisations are the result of such complementarities, it is not something that the organisations themselves pursue as a priority. Instead, they seem to focus on practicalities when

working together, perhaps to avoid disagreement over competing visions, values or theories of change.

Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch



The Fife Diet



The Soil Association

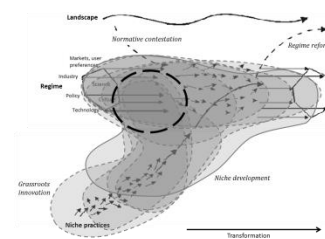


Figure 28. Schematic maps of the roles currently played in transitions by T&PH, the FD, the SA and the other CSOs in their networks – highlighting ‘hotspots’. Diagrams adapted from Geels (2002).

Moreover, the prevalence of organisations enacting each of the four roles varies between the three networks. T&PH seems to work mostly with organisations enacting grassroots innovation and niche development (as shown in the leftmost pane of Figure 28 above, the BDAC, BDLT, BDA, TFR and the SA all enact niche development), whereas the FD works mostly with organisations enacting niche development and normative contestation, and the SA seems to work mostly with organisations enacting normative contestation (i.e. see ‘hotspot’ areas with the deepest shading in Figure 28 above). Thus, in addition to working together by adopting contrasting but synergistic roles, it seems that the CSOs in my study also club together in the performance of the same roles.

The FD works with numerous organisations doing *grassroots innovation* (including GK, M-CAN and Grow-Com) and talked about these relationships in terms of inspiring each other to push their boundaries by experimenting with new practices, sharing ideas and provoking each other to reflect on what they’re doing in new ways. Moreover, by sharing their networks and infrastructures, all three of my case organisations are engaged in activities that enrich and extend each other’s ability to do *niche development*. For instance, the creation of the Sustainable Food Cities network and the FFLP by the SA both strengthens and draws upon the FD’s existing organic and local food networks in and around Edinburgh. Likewise, the groundwork for the creation of the CSA UK Network, also set up by the SA, was largely laid down by members of T&PH, the BDA and the BDLT (i.e.

biodynamic movement activists), but its consolidation under the funded national body is likely to boost the capacity of all organisations involved to further develop the CSA model. Additionally, in terms of *normative contestation*, both the SA and the FD have been involved in attempts to create campaign coalitions to speak with one voice with other organisations – the SA’s NIMB campaign and the FD’s Manifesto being good examples. And finally, the SA and the FD have also embarked on an attempt to jointly deliver *regime reform* by going into partnership with Fife Council to pilot the FFL catering mark bronze award in primary schools.

Furthermore, as well as providing mutual support, individual CSOs in my study antagonise each other in ways that may partly correspond to the roles they play in transition. For instance, objections about the SA from other organisations in my study include the following. One interviewee complained that the SA’s organic production standards are too similar to conventional agricultural standards to offer a truly sustainable alternative – a critique that resonates with Smith’s (2007) observation that niche innovations must be made to fit with regime contexts if they are to be incorporated in regime reforms. Another interviewee complained about the SA behaving in a self-interested and territorial manner by ignoring and overshadowing synergistic developments unless they could take ownership of them. In a similar vein, a third interviewee suggested that the SA had come across as opportunistic and instrumentalising in some of their dealings, only lending support when there was a clear strategic benefit for the organisation (cf. the cause). Perhaps this hard-nosed characteristic of the SA has contributed to the organisation’s longevity, growth and capacity to influence regime actors. In fact, the closeness of the SA to commercial and political interests was the subject of criticism from two further interviewees, who argued that it compromises the SA’s standards and capacity to be objective.

On the other hand, T&PH and the FD were only criticised on one count each; T&PH for being insular and the FD for exaggerating their impact. Though the evidence that I have presented is anecdotal, I would suggest that part of the explanation for the SA attracting so much more criticism is tied up with it being so much better-known and more deeply

involved in food system politics than the other two organisations. These factors are clearly also tied up with its involvement with regime actors, and this linked to the regime reform role. In short, doing regime reform may mean raising your head above the parapet in ways that the other roles do not imply. Likewise, the alleged insularity of T&PH is somewhat characteristic of an organisation that is focussed on experimenting with alternative practices within a protective niche, and the alleged hyperbole of the FD makes sense when considering that the organisation has gone from non-existence to performing all roles simultaneously within such a short timeframe. However, whilst these different antagonisms may correspond to the roles that they enact in the ways that I have suggested, there are surely other factors in play too, such as the longevity, scale, and alterity of the organisations and their activities. Moreover, whilst tension can feel uncomfortable, it may be productive at the systems level, by encouraging organisations to be reflexive and to engage critically with each other.

Another blind spot of the literature on sustainability transitions, which largely focusses on learning and networks, is the significance of resources, material and otherwise, to the processes of transition and the relationships between the actors involved. By turning my attention to this, I have found that a wide range of different kinds of resources – including infrastructural, financial, technical, cognitive, organisational, human, discursive and imaginary – are used and exchanged between the CSOs in my three cases, and seem vital to their attempts to drive change (see Table 24 below). This analysis underlines Avelino and Rotmans' (2009) account of power in transitions, in which the use and exchange of resources crucially underpins agency.

But quite apart from the sustainability transitions literature and the RIT framework, I also noted some other kinds of relationships which add to this picture of complexity. It was my intention when designing the study that each of the total 18 organisations investigated would belong to one of three cases of 'organisations and their networks'. But my final analysis revealed that these groupings only partially reflect the actual patterns of relationships between them. For instance, there are in fact two organisations – the SA and Sustain – which I have allotted to more than one case. Moreover, the BDA, FD, NS,

Grow-Com, FEC and WWF-UK all have relationships with organisations from another case. Thus, Figure 29 below portrays one single network, as opposed to three separate ones.

Table 24. Different kinds of resources that the three case organisations exchange with the other organisations in their networks; ‘gains’ are recorded first, with a solid black left-pointing arrow; ‘gives’ are recorded second, with a white right-pointing arrow.

Resources	T&PH	FD	SA
Infrastructural and financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ← Access to land ← Access to physical resources ⇒ Access to land ⇒ Access to physical resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ← Access to physical resources ⇒ Access to physical resources ⇒ Access to funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ← License fees
Technical and cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ← Technical advice ← Knowledge and expertise ⇒ Credible case study ⇒ Ideas and learning ⇒ Expertise ⇒ Training for students and apprentices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ← Knowledge and expertise ← Ideas and inspiration ⇒ Knowledge and expertise ⇒ Ideas and inspiration ⇒ A model of good practice for dietary change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ← Models of good practice for OBGs & CSA ← Standards for catering mark ← Knowledge and expertise ← Ideas and criticism ⇒ Technical advice ⇒ Knowledge and expertise ⇒ Ideas and criticism
Organisational and human	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ← Access to local community ← Unpaid semi-skilled personnel ← Networking ⇒ Networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ← Access to local community ← Fellowship ← Networking ⇒ Access to local community ⇒ Networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ← Skilled personnel ← Fellowship and support ← Campaign coalitions ← Partnerships and collaboration ⇒ Fellowship and support ⇒ Partnerships and collaboration ⇒ Campaign coalitions
Discursive and imaginary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ← Marketing tools ← Promotional opportunities ← Improved public profile ⇒ Improved public profile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ← Promotional opportunities ← Communications support ⇒ Credibility ⇒ Politicisation ⇒ Support in getting established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ← Credibility ← Promotional opportunities ← Speakers for events ← Guest blogs on websites ⇒ Credibility ⇒ Marketing tool ⇒ Market exposure ⇒ Promotional opportunities ⇒ Guest articles in magazines ⇒ Speakers for events

Moreover, the CSOs in my study share other forms of association, in addition to the working relationships represented by the connecting lines of the networks in Figure 29, and these give rise to a complex topology of relations between them. Firstly, all the CSOs in my study are related to each other by their engagement with a distinct UK-centric food and farming policy/issue field, which was another criterion on which I based my selection of cases and my sampling of organisations within each case⁶³. Furthermore, I have found that they identify with different, but often overlapping, social movements, e.g. the community-led trade movement, the local food movement, the biodynamic movement, the organic movement, the sustainable food movement, the environment movement, and so on. And additionally, some of them are related through place, the village of Forest Row and the country of Scotland being two significant places that feature in my case studies.

Looking closely at Figure 29 below, the organisations in the SA case appear, on average, to be comparatively more integrated within the overall network than those in the T&PH and FD cases, with the organisations in the T&PH case being least integrated. This pattern partly corresponds with the functions associated with the roles in transition that they each play, with grassroots innovation perhaps requiring the least input from other CSOs. But again, the fact that T&PH is the smallest of the three in terms of the geographic scale of operations and appears to be the most embedded in place – the SA being the largest and least embedded – is likely to be reflected in the extent to which they are networked with other organisations. Thus, the situation represented in Figure 29 seems to indicate the nested structure of networks within civil society as described in different contexts by the Food Ethics Council (2011), Salamon and Anheier (1997) and Alcock (2010).

Thus, to sum up, I have found that CSOs relate to the roles in transition by working in complex (often implicit) divisions of labour, utilising their differences by enacting different but synergistic roles, as well as exploiting their commonalities by clubbing together to perform the same roles. Moreover, in addition to sharing knowledge and networks, I

⁶³ Though for some of them food and farming is merely a part of what they do, for others it is central to their existence.

found that they mobilise a variety of resources on each other's behalf as they enact the roles, and encounter antagonism, as well as mutual benefit, from their relationships.

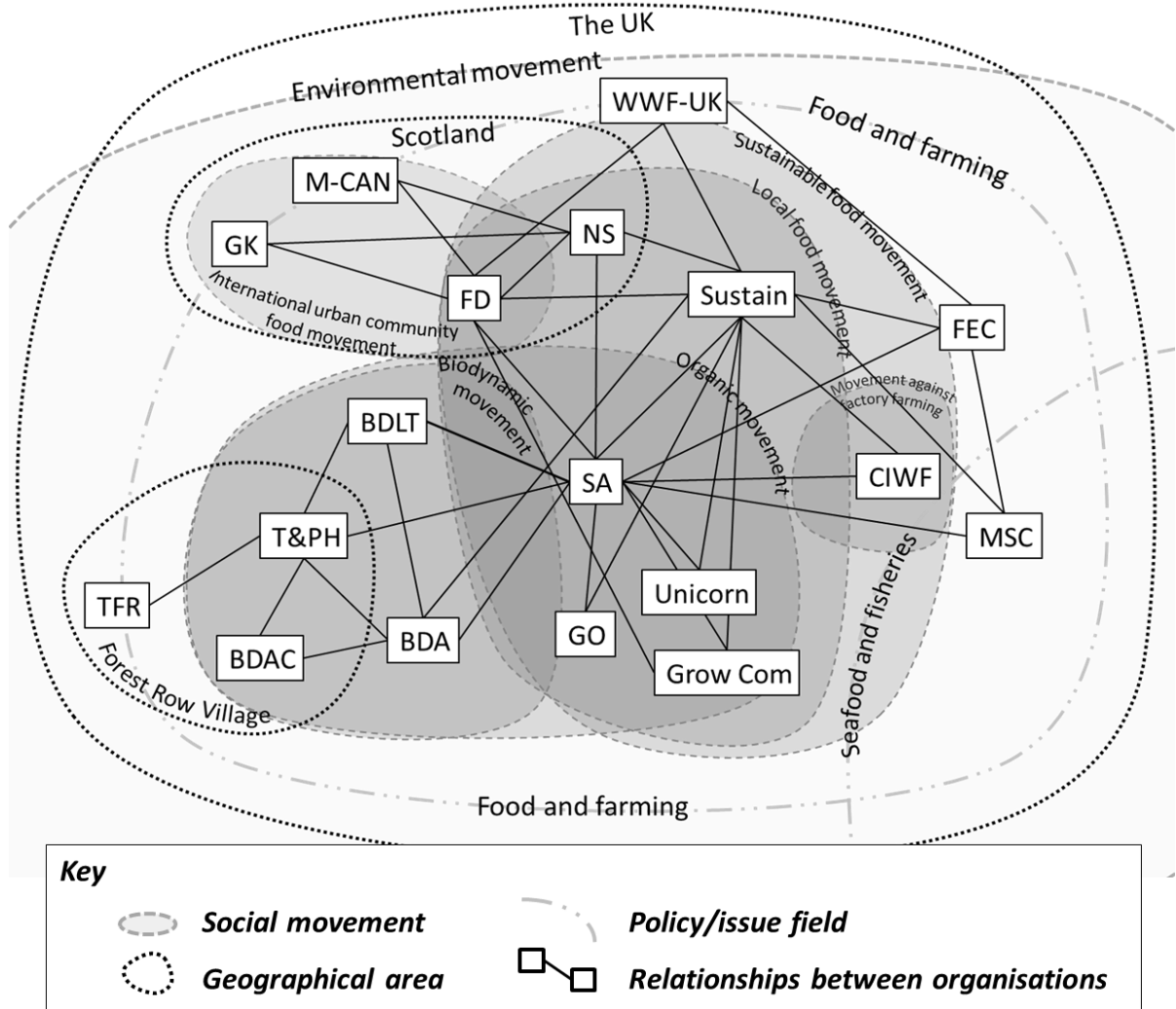


Figure 29. Social worlds/arenas map showing the collective commitments of and relationships between the 18 organisations in my study.

10.2.3 Dynamism

Evidence from across my three case studies suggests that individual CSOs from within the food and farming sub-sector of civil society tend to shift positions over time, favouring different roles in response to internal and external developments. As I have shown in CHAPTER 7, CHAPTER 8 and CHAPTER 9, even organisations that have been established for many years, such as the SA, are not static or set in their ways when it comes to their attempts to drive change. Using historical sources, I documented the shifting emphasis of

my three case organisations, which have all tended to favour different roles at different times (see Figure 30 below). This finding accords with previous research which suggests that CSOs position themselves with respect to each other in order to make room for themselves within dynamic external landscapes that are strategically selective, and that their strategic positions – concerning what they do, who they do it with, and when and where they do it – are subject to significant changes over time (Macmillan 2011).

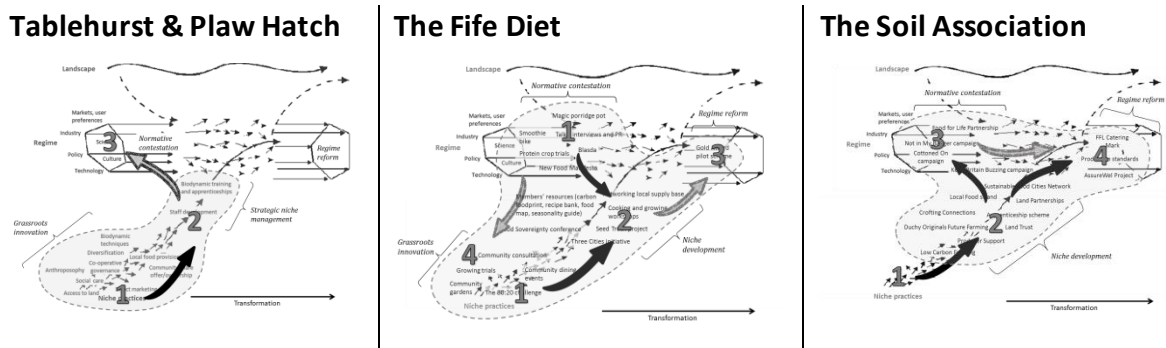


Figure 30. Schematic maps of the three case organisations highlighting the shifts in emphasis between the roles they have enacted over time. Solid black arrows represent past shifts and grey arrows represent ongoing or planned shifts. Numbered positions indicate the time sequence of shifts.

To briefly re-cap, the three stories of shifts that are represented in Figure 30 unfolded as follows (but see CHAPTER 7, CHAPTER 8 and CHAPTER 9 for more detail). In the case of T&PH (left), niche development activities were only just present in the organisation's early days (1), but these have been strengthened in recent years (2). Moreover, an area of planned future activity, the 'Learning on the Land' project, embodies characteristics of normative contestation (3). The FD (centre), however, started out doing grassroots innovation and normative contestation (1). But after an injection of funding it moved into activities that embodied characteristics of niche development (2). Moreover, the FD has recently begun to work on an initiative – the FFL Bronze Award Scheme – that embodies regime reform (3). Nonetheless, the question of where the emphasis will lie in the near future is open but evidence from my interviews suggests a possible shift back towards grassroots innovation, as staff discussed plans to do more practical projects in the local area and a recent announcement in the local media (Naysmith 2014) suggests that the FD will try to move away from grant funding (4). As for the SA (right), in its early days it

played an important role in the creation of organic food systems in the UK (1), which it has subsequently given up. Then, in the 1960's and 1970's, the SA focussed its efforts on developing the organic niche (2), and subsequently, from the 1980's to 1990's, it switched focus onto a number of disruptive campaigns that promoted organic food as a solution to regime problems (3). Most recently, during the 2000's, the SA has developed a new strategic focus on reforming incumbent food regimes (4).

These pathways, traced by the three organisations over time, have certain similarities and differences. In common, all three started out doing grassroots innovation and then moved into niche development-related activities. However, the FD was engaged in normative contestation from the outset too, whereas T&PH and the SA were not, instead focussing on internal developments within the biodynamic and organic niches. T&PH still largely works within niche spaces, having relatively few connections with external actors, whereas the SA has truly broken out of the organic niche, now working with a wide array of commercial and institutional actors within regime contexts, and linking to other social movements. Another difference between these pathways – aside from the directions they have moved in – is the time that the organisations have taken to move from one role to another. In its first five or so years the FD has proven to be highly fluid and mobile, moving quickly in different directions from multiple loci. T&PH, however, has been slower and steadier, moving over a period of almost 20 years from the grassroots, into niche space, and now contemplating a more outward-facing orientation. And the SA, finally, has been even more gradual in its step-wise shifts, spending around 60 years on its pathway from the grassroots, into niche space, then engaging in contestation with regime actors, before finding itself involved in a more constructive mode, encouraging regime reforms.

Though I cannot claim that these three pathways are in any sense typical of CSOs, they could indicate that civil society actors engaged in attempts to drive systemic change in food systems towards sustainability are themselves transformed through their own learning journeys. Under this view, the shifting of positions from role to role could be consciously directed, as singular or collective actors respond to external pressures and the emergence of specific tensions and synergies between the roles. Comments made by SA

staff in interviews and historical sources certainly suggest that the pathway taken by the SA was steered by conscious decisions. But of course these retrospective rationalisations may not correspond with the lived realities at the time; they may have been more opportunistic than suggested, or even accidental. Discovering precisely why these shifts came about and why the three organisations – the FD in particular – followed subtly different pathways is beyond the scope of the methods used in this study.

Moreover, like sustainability transitions, historical shifts in the strategic positioning of civil society actors need not necessarily be smooth – they might stop and start, grind to a halt, set off from different points, skip phases, or recursively cycle through the same phases without reaching a new outcome. Hess (2005) and Smith (2006) both documented the recursivity of attempts by civil society actors to drive change in socio-technical systems. Specifically, they described how established coalitions of civil society actors often split off into radical and reforming arms and engage each other in boundary conflicts through which they seek to redefine alternative and mainstream practices on their own terms (Hess 2005). Hence, by attempting a return to the grassroots and core values of the movement or niche, radicals create new practices and systems that both build upon the original grassroots practices and draw down lessons from their previous involvements with regime actors, thus creating new starting points for transformation.

Based on this, I would suggest that the positioning of civil society actors with respect to radical and reforming arms could therefore influence the sequence of roles that they enact over time. For instance, the biodynamic and organic movements share common roots (Table 27, at the end of the chapter). However, they partly split off from each other before the real growth in organic farming began in the 1970s, with the result of positioning the biodynamic movement as the radical arm of the organic movement and destined to remain within protected niche spaces. The organic movement, in the meantime, has undergone ‘conventionalisation’ (Buck, Getz et al. 1997), with organic food becoming gradually more similar to conventional systems. Hence, CSOs that want to be part of a movement – like the SA, T&PH and Grow-Com – have to choose which to identify with, even if they find organic standards too weak and biodynamic standards too tough.

T&PH's choice to go with biodynamics is reflected in its historical reluctance to engage directly with regime actors, whereas Grow-Com, which is aligned with the organic movement, has more readily embraced outward-facing roles, producing a manifesto for transforming the food system. The SA, clearly, has steadily embraced more regime-oriented activities throughout the course of its existence as the UK's largest representative body of the organic movement.

Nonetheless, the FD has been even more ready to engage with incumbent actors and enact regime-facing roles than the SA. Starting out in 1946, at a time when the post-war productivist food regime was just gaining momentum, the SA – along with other pioneering organisations of the organic movement – blazed a trail for subsequent developments towards more sustainable food systems. Throughout the 1950's, 60's, 70's, 80's and 90's, the SA and its comrades were widely regarded as marginal and had little influence in the media, markets and the institutions of government. However, by the 2000's this had changed quite dramatically. After a half century of movement building and slowly growing niche markets, the SA found itself in a situation where organic, fair-trade and other alternative foods were available in mainstream retail outlets. In the past decade alone, a wide variety of cross-cutting food movements have come into existence – including (*inter alia*) the food sovereignty, agroecology, community-led trade, local and slow food movements. Moreover, by the late 2000s, campaigns for school food reform and civic involvement in food systems had hit the headlines and the Government had injected £50 million worth of grants into the local food movement. It was against this background that the FD was launched on its transformative pathway from an entirely new starting point in 2007, capitalising on over eighty years of related developments. Hence, it might be said to have 'hit the ground running', being able to draw upon both the newer, more radical developments as well as the established connections of the older movements and niches.

But this shifting of positions between niche-facing and regime-facing roles is not the only form of dynamism that I found amongst the CSOs in my study. A corresponding dimension of organisational change relates to internal management; I found some

evidence to suggest that CSOs elaborate different internal structures over time. Though not explicitly addressed within my case study chapters, this accords with previous research discussed in CHAPTER 3 which describes two main ways that NPOs typically respond to their environments through their own organisational arrangements. According to Anheier (2000), given that NPOs, and by the same token CSOs, are made up of multiple internal components – and often adopt multivalent strategies that encompass multiple roles in transition – they must find effective and efficient ways of managing this internal complexity. The two main ways are through (1) the elaboration of internal hierarchies (called the palace approach), and (2) keeping an agile, networked structure (called the tent approach) – and they are associated with different emergent properties, or dimensions (described in CHAPTER 3, section 3.2). However, they are not considered as discrete categories of organisations, but rather as tendencies (towards being more palace-like or tent-like) that may change over time.

Reflecting on my case study research, I have identified four examples of organisations displaying these tendencies, including two of each type (see Table 25 below).

Table 25. Dimensions of tents and palaces (Anheier 2000), with examples from my study.

Dimensions	Palace	Tent
Values	Predictability	Creativity, immediacy and initiative
Performance	Efficiency within stable sets of practices, divisions of labour and evaluative criteria	Effectiveness and flexibility with respect to time-bound and case-specific missions
Primary orientation	Responsive to internal developments	Responsive to external shifts
Internal structure	Hierarchical	Networked
<i>Examples</i>	<i>SA, T&PH</i>	<i>TFR, Sustain</i>

The point is not to suggest that the four organisations named above are destined to always behave in these ways (though there is likely to be some inertia involved). Rather, it is to observe how these tendencies condition the responses of organisations to changes in their internal and external environments – and how this in turn influences the roles that

they play in transition. Critically, I would suggest that organisations exhibiting these different tendencies (palace and tent) may each be more suited to certain kinds of activities, which may in turn be associated with different roles in transition and transformative pathways. For instance, the cases of the SA and Sustain serve to illustrate this point very nicely.

Identified as the most influential and well-connected organisations in the food and farming CSO-sector (Food Ethics Council 2011), both have invested considerable effort into public sector food standards in recent years. But whereas the SA has gone from school to school (and hospital to hospital, and ditto other public sector organisations), co-ordinating the reform of food standards in canteens on a voluntary basis (i.e. via the FFLP and FFL catering mark), Sustain has put its energy into generating pressure on policymakers to change legislation that would create new mandatory standards.

In order to roll out the FFL catering mark, the SA has made use of its 185+ members of staff, including its nationwide network of certification officers employed by SA-CERT and its team of support staff employed by the charity. And, as described in CHAPTER 9, the SA has elaborated an internal structure that reinforces the division between these two functional components of the organisation, and which is necessary in order for the synergies between the FFLP campaign and FFL certification scheme (catering mark) to be realised. Sustain, on the other hand, has no such scale of operations, with only 26 members of staff and less than 1/5th of the SA's income. What it does have, however, is a vast network of member organisations that it can pull together into powerful alliances to back public campaigns and lobby government. Hence, whereas the SA now faces the ongoing running and maintenance of its certification schemes, Sustain has made no such commitments and is free to pick up and drop campaigns in response to external opportunities.

Three other cases also serve to highlight this link. T&PH, TFR and the FD all started out by pioneering innovative systems of food provisioning on a local scale. But they have each exhibited different tendencies in terms of how they manage internal complexity and each

performs a different suite of roles. First, T&PH – which is relatively specialised towards performing the grassroots innovation and niche development roles – has, as described above, followed a gradual, stepwise pathway towards increasing outward orientation, and meanwhile developed a highly structured internal configuration. Second, TFR – which is also relatively specialised towards performing the grassroots innovation and normative contestation roles – has grown and shrunk in size, becoming active and returning to dormancy, in response to opportunities that have largely arisen externally. Third, the FD – which is strongly multivalent, performing all roles to some extent – has so far retained a relatively flat, networked organisational structure whilst working to improve organisational efficiency, *and* rapidly forging parallel pathways towards (1) greater engagement with the regime actors and (2) closer connection to the grassroots, making it a truly hybrid example, in all senses described.

I have attempted to highlight and summarise these cases – and the insight that they provide with regards to the potential link between the internal management structures and strategies of CSOs, on the one hand, and the roles that they play in transition, on the other – in Figure 31 below. But I conclude that this matter clearly deserves further attention from scholars of sustainability transitions, though it is not possible within these pages (see CHAPTER 11, Section 11.3).

So, to attempt a summary, in this section I have shown that civil society actors engaged in attempts to drive systemic change in food systems are themselves transformed through their own learning journeys. Shifting position from role to role, they each chart unique transformative pathways, exhibiting a crucial element of dynamism. Though it is unclear whether these pathways are more or less consciously directed by CSOs, I have shown that the directionality and temporality of individual organisations' pathways are conditioned by multiple factors, including the positioning of civil society actors with respect to radical and reforming arms of alternative niches, as well as tendencies in the way that they respond to external developments and manage internal complexity. Moreover, given that CSOs are highly interdependent and capable of building upon each other's past experiences and achievements, they continuously create new starting points for future

transformations. In this way, collective pathways are forged as a result of the interactions between multiple organisations – and though the individual organisations involved may appear to be recursively cycling through the same roles, considered *en masse* it is clear that they are generating a collective impact on food systems.

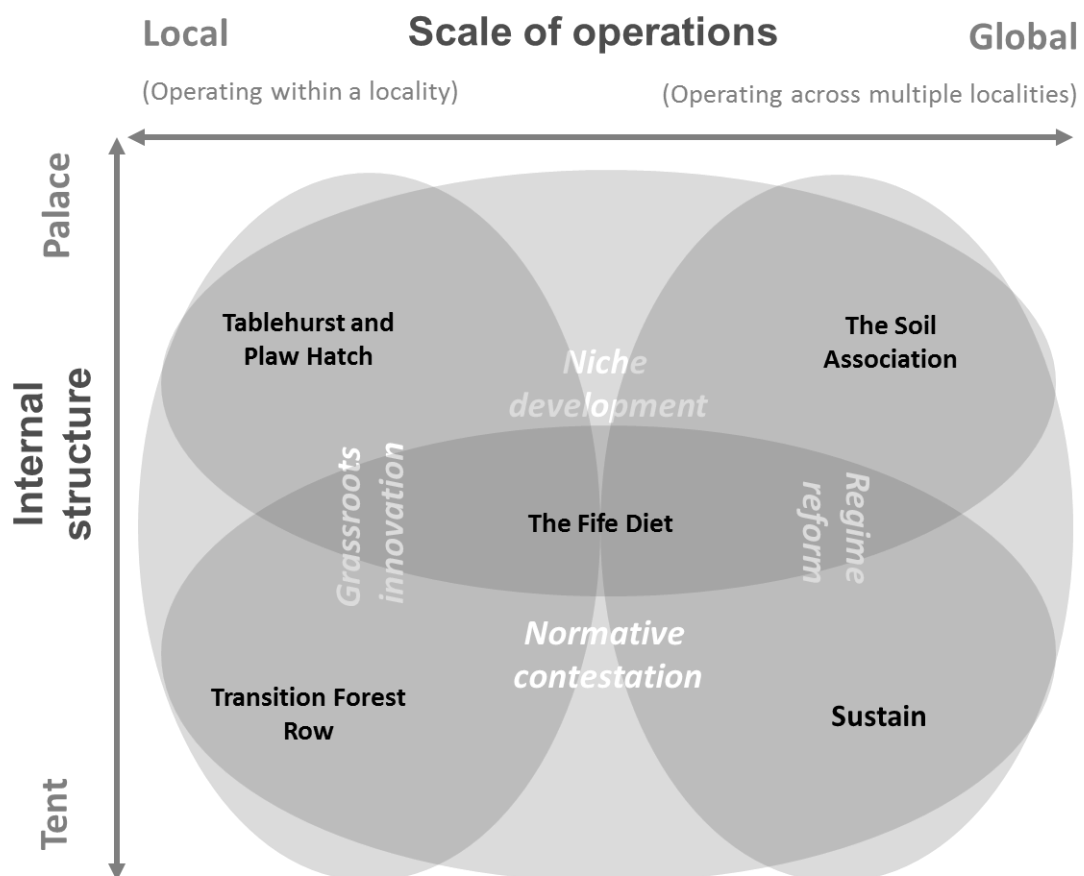


Figure 31. Potential links between the internal management structures of CSOs working at different scales of operations, on the one hand, and the roles that they play in transition, on the other; as highlighted by the cases of T&PH, TFR, the FD, the SA and Sustain.

10.2.4 Summary

In this section I confronted the RIT framework with evidence of how specific civil society actors enact the four roles in practice. In doing so, I discussed evidence from across my three cases that points to the existence of specific properties of civil society actors which may be crucial to understanding CSO agency in transitions. First, I argued that civil society actors tend to exhibit *multivalency*, i.e. they enact multivalent strategies that encompass

multiple roles simultaneously. Second, I argued that they tend to exhibit *relational complexity*, i.e. they have a variety of different kinds of relationships with other civil society actors, resulting in complex patternings of civil society networks. And thirdly, I argued that they exhibit *dynamism*, i.e. they tend to shift positions over time, favouring different roles in response to internal and external developments. Moreover, I argued that civil society actors chart unique *transformative pathways* – both at the level of individual organisations, as well as the niche level, as collective pathways emerge from their interactions over time. And I provided examples of the various intra- and inter-organisational *synergies and tensions* that they experience as they enact the different roles.

Together, these findings provide new input for an improved understanding of CSO agency within the sustainability transitions field of research, and are broadly consistent with existing scholarship on civil society from other fields of research (Salamon and Anheier 1997, Anheier 2000, Alcock 2010, Food Ethics Council 2011, Macmillan 2011). They also support specific claims made by transitions scholars concerning the significance of (1) struggles between radical and reforming contingents to redefine niche and regime practices ('boundary conflicts'), and (2) the use and exchange of different kinds of resources (Hess 2005, Smith 2006, Avelino and Rotmans 2009).

In the next section I will confront the RIT framework with evidence of how civil society actors self-define their own activities and relationships with other CSOs, in both formal and informal discourse.

10.3 Stated intentions: actors' own views

My exploration of the views from the individual people involved in my three cases suggested that the level of correspondence between their own understandings of the change they are trying to achieve and the RIT framework is frequent but inconsistent. It also pointed to a difference between the way that they think about change *in abstract* and their thoughts about driving change in their own *particular contexts*. Their views about the properties they associate with sustainable food systems and the most likely drivers of

change towards sustainability (i.e. concerning change in abstract), are relatively regular, both within and between organisations – though there is still much disagreement. However, their views about the roles that their own organisations play in wider change processes and their intended impacts on food systems (i.e. concerning how to drive change in their own particular contexts), show much less regularity and even more disagreement.

By conducting a thematic analysis of my interviews and documentary sources (see CHAPTER 5, section 5.2.2), I found that the properties that individuals from the organisations in my study associate with sustainable food systems share a degree of regularity, especially around the Brundtland concepts of social equity, environmental integrity and individual wellbeing (Stirling Forthcoming), as well as the properties of appropriateness of scale, diversity and seasonality. In combination, these six themes accounted for 46 of the total 67 stated properties (or 69%) that I elicited through interviews and documentary analysis from across all 18 organisations in the three cases (see Figure 32 below). These themes were particularly present from amongst the organisations in the networks of the FD and the SA, but much less so for those in the network of T&PH, who also suggested that properties such as continuity, consciousness, entrepreneurship and ‘choice and power for consumers’ were important aspects of sustainable food systems.

These findings suggest, as anticipated by scholars of sustainability transitions (Berkhout 2006, Markard, Raven et al. 2012), the presence of normative expectations that are shared by organisations within a socio-technical niche, informing – to a greater or lesser extent – their own understandings of the wider change they are trying to achieve. However, the specific descriptions of sustainable food systems offered by individual people varied in their details, suggesting that these shared expectations are shaped by “socially distributed rhetoric” (e.g. the Brundtland discourse on Sustainable Development), rather than “collectively endorsed visions of the end point of the transition process” (Berkhout 2006: 300).

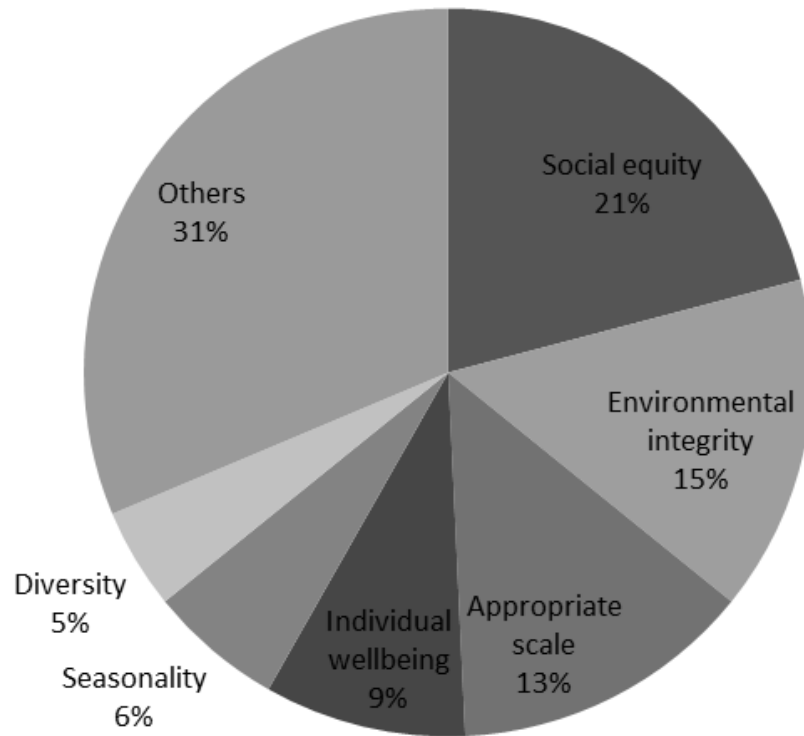


Figure 32. Showing the frequency with which principal themes from my analysis – of the properties that individual people involved in my three cases associate with sustainable food systems – occurred, from a total of 67 stated properties

Likewise, I found that these individual people's views about the most likely drivers of change towards sustainability encompass a high level of variability but seem to cluster around six principal themes, without any residual categories left over. These are, in order of prevalence, (1) government intervention, (2) stress and shocks to the system, (3) grassroots action and beacon projects, (4) education, training and behaviour change, (5) political activism, campaigning and coalition-building, and (6) co-ordinated action on multiple levels with multiple tactics (see Figure 33 below). Interestingly, none of the individuals interviewed suggested that change towards sustainability will be driven by the voluntary behaviour of industries, and nor did they specifically mention a role for private companies. In terms of comparing the three cases, I found no striking or clearly relevant differences between the three cases.

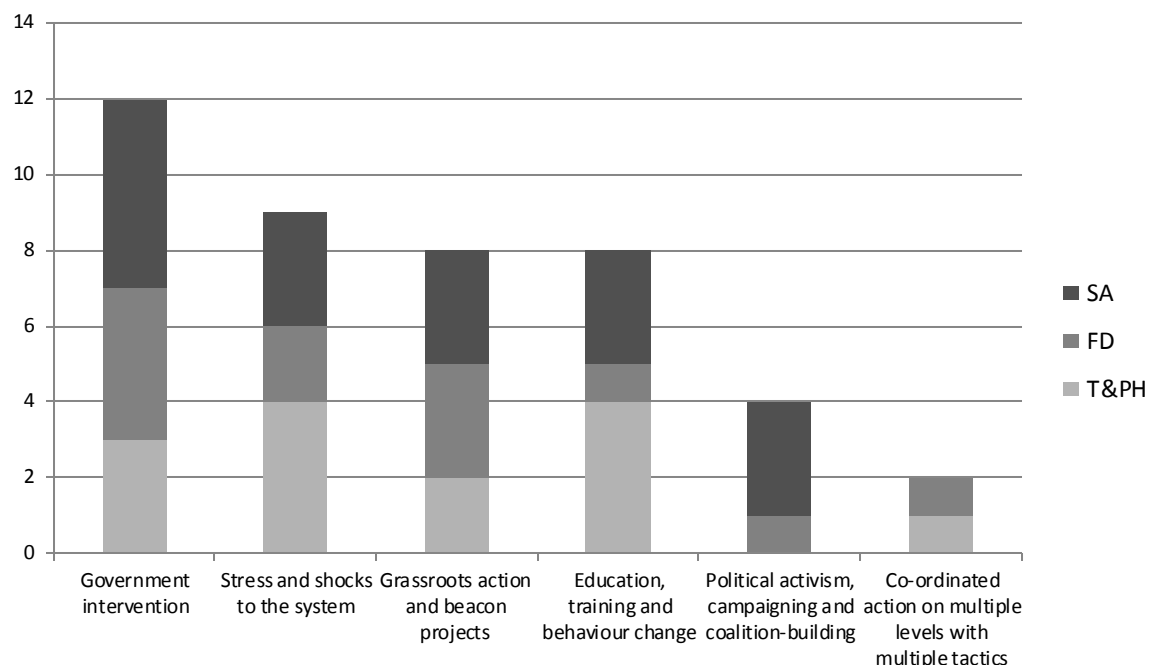


Figure 33. Showing the frequency with which principle themes from my analysis – of the most likely drivers of change towards sustainability in food systems cited by individual people involved in my three cases – occurred, from a total of 37 stated drivers

As I demonstrated in CHAPTER 7, CHAPTER 8 and CHAPTER 9, this regularity was not replicated when it came to their intended impacts on food systems and views about the roles that their organisations play in wider change processes. Between all 18 organisations, their views vary considerably without being associated with the cases that they belong to, or consistently corresponding with the roles in the RIT framework (*inter-organisational variability*). Similarly, within the three case organisations, individual viewpoints diverge from each other and from official views (*intra-organisational variability*). In fact, rather than seeing themselves as playing roles within a singular transition towards a more sustainable future, the intended impacts and perceived roles of the individuals in my study are articulated with respect to a variety of broad social change processes.

Thus, as already suggested, what seems to be at stake for the actors involved is not a single shared vision of transition, but a plurality of intended transformations that cross-cut and partially encompass each other. And this rather implies that, if the roles in transition

are mutually co-constitutive of a whole, the whole is an emergent property of the system and does not correspond to a singular guiding intention or plan held in common by the actors involved.

10.4 Conclusions

In this chapter I set out to produce an improved understanding of the roles that civil society actors play in their attempts to drive change by adopting three distinct approaches to analysing my cases. Firstly, using evidence of civil society activity from across my cases, I characterised the four roles in the RIT framework in terms of the specific elements of food systems through which change is sought and the categories of actors involved. In doing so I found that the categories of actors carrying out practices associated with grassroots innovation – as well as those using and benefitting from niche development activities – include many different types and that they come together in ways that eschew easy analytical hierarchies such as implied by the levels of the MLP. I also raised important questions for transitions scholars by demonstrating some of the different ways that CSOs have instigated reforms to incumbent regimes. Thus, I have both nuanced and extended existing frameworks for understanding the roles that civil society actors play in their attempts to drive change.

Secondly, using evidence of how individual CSOs from each of my cases enact the roles, I uncovered three specific properties of civil society actors which may be crucial to understanding CSO agency in transitions, as well as various synergies and tensions that they experience as they enact the different roles. (1) The property of multivalency, which can give rise to internal fragmentation and conflicts of interests, as well as promising numerous synergies for individual CSOs. (2) The property of relational complexity, which produces plentiful benefits for CSOs – enabling them to utilise their differences and exploit their commonalities as they mobilise a variety of resources on each other's behalf – whilst only giving rise to occasional antagonism. (3) The property of dynamism, which enables them to respond to external developments, manage internal complexity, and build upon each other's past experiences and achievements. From this, I argued that civil

society actors chart unique *transformative pathways* – both at the level of individual CSOs, as well as the niche level, as collective pathways emerge from their interactions over time.

Thirdly, using evidence of the stated intentions of the individual people within each of the organisations from the three cases in my study, I showed that – rather than being guided by a single shared vision of transition – CSOs are engaged in a *plurality of intended transformations* articulated with respect to different social arenas.

In the next chapter I will position these findings with respect to the Sustainability Transitions, Alternative Food Networks and Civil Society literatures, evaluate my efforts to answer my original research questions, and identify avenues for further research.

Table 26. The principal kinds of activities, relationships with other CSOs and state and market actors, and styles of governance and management that characterise the four roles in the RIT framework

Grassroots innovation	Niche development	Normative contestation	Regime reform
<p>Alternative forms of production</p> <p>Biodynamic/organic/low-carbon agriculture and horticulture, aquaponics, farm diversification, and growing trials for novel crops</p> <p>Peri-urban farming, urban market gardening and food-growing on urban micro-sites</p> <p>Communal growing in gardens, allotments and orchards</p> <p>Garden-sharing and seed swapping amongst individuals</p> <p>Alternative forms of marketing, distribution and retail</p> <p>Direct marketing through farm shops, box schemes and farmers' markets; co-operative retail operations</p> <p>Alternative forms of consumption</p> <p>Local diet challenge, community dining events</p> <p>Food waste collection</p> <p>Alternative forms of social organisation</p> <p>Community consultation</p> <p>Communal ownership by shares</p> <p>Co-operative governance</p> <p>Care-farming</p> <p>Anthroposophy</p>	<p>Developing personnel</p> <p>Providing accredited horticultural and agricultural training programmes (including distance-learning and residential courses), un-accredited cooking and growing workshops/courses, apprenticeship schemes and volunteer and staff development programmes</p> <p>Developing alternative models</p> <p>Improving knowledge of alternative models by commissioning research, collating case studies, co-ordinating trials and running breeding programmes</p> <p>Providing guidance and technical assistance for practitioners through helplines, online and printed resources (including toolkits and how-to guides), knowledge transfer programmes (peer-to-peer and expert-led), and formal standards and guidelines</p> <p>Developing networks and infrastructures</p> <p>Establishing formal members' networks (place-based and nationwide) through online networking platforms, e-zines and network-building events</p> <p>Facilitating new partnerships between network members and networking local supply bases</p> <p>Providing secure land tenure at below-market rates, start-up funding, specialist inputs</p> <p>Assisting with community planning processes, supporting funding bids</p>	<p>Challenging citizens/consumers</p> <p>Raising awareness and mobilising peoples' support through attention-grabbing stunts, story-telling, celebrity patronage, e-zines and online petitions</p> <p>Influencing consumption behaviour, educating and re-skilling people through the provision of information, guidance and advice in food outlets, at public events and through public institutions</p> <p>Promoting alternatives to people through advertisements, events and celebrations, public demonstrations and permanent displays</p> <p>Generating moralistic pressure by publicly championing and promoting 'good' businesses and practices, naming and shaming 'bad' businesses and practices, and opposing undesirable developments</p> <p>Challenging policymakers</p> <p>Influencing policy-making processes by hosting policy development platforms, providing tools for decision-making, responding to government consultations and submitting evidence for planning procedures</p> <p>Advocating specific policy changes by publishing reports and political manifestos, giving public talks and media interviews, issuing press releases, and lobbying politicians directly</p>	<p>Reforming incumbent industries</p> <p>Certification and labelling of products, outlets and supply chains using alternative standards and assurance schemes</p> <p>Incorporation of alternative assessment systems into commercial standards</p> <p>Reforming incumbent institutions</p> <p>Incorporation of alternative criteria into procurement rules for public sector institutions and major public events</p> <p>Delivering commissionable service packages (including food service, food education, business development, and so on) for local authorities so they can meet their health and wellbeing obligations</p> <p>Residual/landscape-oriented</p> <p>Convening multi-stakeholder platforms to drive dissemination of alternative criteria beyond the UK</p>

Table 27. Summary of relevant historical developments food markets, policy and civil society (from chapter two) tracked against historical developments in the three case organisations, from the 1920s to the present

Dates	Market and policy developments	Civil society developments	Developments in the cases
1920s – 1930s	Inter-war depression	Philosophical and scientific debates about the relationships between soil and health in agriculture form a source of inspiration for pioneers of alternative farming methods Rudolf Steiner gives a series of lectures outlining the biodynamic agricultural paradigm , stimulating the practice of biodynamic farming by small numbers of dedicated individuals in Western Europe	The BDA is established
1940's – 1960's	Productionism, surpluses and junk food boom	Slow growth of alternative food movements The term 'organic' is coined by biodynamic farmer, Baron Northbourne, and henceforth the two communities of practice start to diverge (though there is continued crossover)	The SA is founded and becomes a key player in the creation of organic agricultural practices in the UK
1970's – 1990's	Opening markets to EU products and shrinking domestic food production Food scares and Government handing responsibility to the private sector	Rapid growth of niche markets for Organic and Fair-trade products	The SA shifts focus from the creation of organic practices towards the development of the organic niche T&PH create a new configuration of biodynamic community farming, thanks to the protection and nurturing offered by networks of supporters Biodynamic farmer, Patrick Holden, who trained at T&PH , is made president of the SA
2000's	Food Safety Act and recognition of consumer interests Foot & Mouth outbreak, Curry Commission and scrutiny of the food system Environmental issues in food production, stewardship role for farmers within the CAP	Mainstreaming of Organic , Fair-trade and other alternative foods Growth in civic involvement in food systems Campaigns for school food reform Launch of the Local Food Fund and injection of	The SA shifts focus again, from the development of the organic niche to disruptive campaigns against mainstream food systems T&PH enters a period of financial stability and engages a wider public, but loses the strength of community connections enjoyed in the

	<p>and the GM debate</p> <p>'Obesity epidemic' white paper, behaviour change policies and further scrutiny of the food system</p> <p>Climate change, food price spikes and further scrutiny of the food system, including publication of Food 2030, UK Food Security Assessment, the Foresight report, the Green Food Project and Shaping the Future</p> <p>Devolution of powers to the regional assemblies</p>	£50 million into the local food movement	<p>'early days'</p> <p>The FD creates a new configuration of local and low-carbon eating practices amongst a small circle of friends, but gains rapid exposure from the local and national media which helps to recruit members from wider social networks</p>
2010's	<p>Scottish food policy, Recipe for Success and the Climate Challenge Fund (CCF)</p> <p>Credit Crunch (impact of) and public sector budget cuts</p>	Local food movement links with global food sovereignty movements	<p>The SA shifts focus a third time, from normative contestation to regime reform – exemplified by the FFLP</p> <p>T&PH strengthens its role in the development of biodynamic and community farming niches</p> <p>The FD gains funding from the CCF and extends into a wide range of activities aimed at creating local food systems, developing local food infrastructures and enabling people to participate in local food systems</p> <p>The SA and the FD enter into a partnership with Fife Council to pilot the Food for Life Catering Mark's highest standard in Fife schools, with a focus on local sourcing</p>

CHAPTER 11. Conclusion

In this chapter I will evaluate my efforts to answer my research questions, highlight the most significant contributions of my work to theory, policy and practice, and identify avenues for further research.

11.1 Research questions

The central problem that I have tackled in this thesis revolves around the current attempts from civil society actors in the UK to make food systems more sustainable, i.e. greener, fairer and healthier. For although these efforts have been maintained over several decades – e.g. the Soil Association was launched in response to concerns about modern agriculture and food in 1946 – on the whole, more sustainable food systems remain marginal. Thus, I have endeavoured to shed light on the important roles that civil society actors can and do play within processes of large-scale social change (or ‘transitions’). And in order to guide me towards improved understanding of this problem – i.e. of how civil society actors seek to drive change towards sustainability in food systems, and, therefore, how they might provide a key for unlocking unsustainable patterns of food provision that prevail under incumbent regimes – I posed three research questions:

1. What are the distinguishable kinds of roles that civil society actors play in their attempts to drive change towards sustainability in food systems?
2. How do individual civil society organisations (CSOs), parts of CSOs, and associations of multiple CSOs relate to these roles, and to each other, concurrently and over time?
3. How do these roles relate to the stated intentions of key-actors within CSOs?

In subsequent chapters I have provided answers to these questions, though I will now take the opportunity to summarise, clearly and succinctly, what I have learned.

With respect to my first research question, I created a typology of civil society ‘roles in transition’ that is comprised of four distinguishable roles and which reflects different scholarly understandings of sustainability transitions. I deduced this typology by reviewing relevant sections of the literature on Sustainability Transitions, creating definitions of the distinguishable roles in transition ascribed to civil society actors by scholars, and further defining the core characteristics of those roles. I then put this typology – which I called the ‘roles in transition’ (RIT) framework – to the test and found that the organisations in my study were carrying out a range of activities that embody the core characteristics of the four roles to varying extents. From this evidence I produced an improved framework that is grounded in the empirical situation of the food and farming sector. The improved framework differentiates the four roles in terms of the specific elements in food systems through which change is sought, and the categories of actors involved (Figure 27 and Table 23 in CHAPTER 10). Within both the original and improved versions the roles are viewed as functions within an overarching process (i.e. systemic innovation).

With respect to my second research question, I made a number of discoveries about how CSOs relate to each other and to the roles. In order to test the RIT framework I compared specific enactments of the roles by individual CSOs from my three case studies. Specifically, I found that they: (1) enact multivalent strategies (i.e. that encompass multiple roles simultaneously); (2) have a variety of different kinds of relationships with other civil society actors, resulting in complex patternings of civil society networks and alliances; (3) shift positions over time, favouring different roles in response to internal and external developments; (4) experience synergies and tensions, both internally and in their interactions, as they enact the different roles; (5) elaborate internal structures through which these synergies and tensions can be managed. From this analysis I argued that civil society actors chart unique transformative pathways, both individually and collectively, which emerge from their interactions and strategic repositioning over time.

With respect to my third research question, I explored the views espoused by the civil society actors themselves. I found that their own accounts of the change they are trying

to achieve frequently, yet inconsistently, correspond with the RIT framework, but that rather than being guided by a single shared vision of transition, they are engaged in a plurality of intended transformations that cross-cut and partially encompass each other.

11.2 Contributions

In this section I will clarify the contributions that these findings can make to theory, policy and practice.

11.2.1 Theory

In this section I will relate my findings to the three main theoretical literatures that I used in the conceptualisation and design of the study, i.e. the Sustainability Transitions, Alternative Food Networks and Civil Society literatures.

Sustainability Transitions

As described in the previous section, my work contributes towards existing attempts to theorise civil society actors in sustainability transitions. But it does so in various ways and, in doing so, it also makes other contributions.

First, my work contributes to scholarly understandings of how civil society actors exercise power (or, in other words, exert agency) in the context of transitions. For I have shown that by enacting multiple strategic roles simultaneously, forming complex alliances, and responding dynamically to internal and external developments, CSOs can harness synergies between the roles and mobilise a variety of resources on each other's behalf, thereby potentially reinforcing their collective impacts on food systems. Moreover, my findings both *reinforce* Avelino and Rotmans' (2009) account of power in transitions – since the four roles in the RIT framework correspond with their four-way typology of power exercise, despite drawing on different theoretical literatures (CHAPTER 4, section 4.3) – and *extend* it, since they offer additional insights into how the four modes of power exercise can, in practice, be manifested by civil society actors. Furthermore, the correspondence between Avelino and Rotmans' (2009) typology and my own could open

up new lines of enquiry into the consequences for civil society actors of enacting different roles, in terms of the resulting power relations between them.

Second, my work contributes to scholarly knowledge about how systemic innovation operates at different structural levels, targets different elements within socio-technical systems, and engages different kinds of actors and practices. As explained in chapter one, systemic innovation drives radical and system-wide change, implying the re-conception and remaking of entire systems of provision (Geels 2004b). As an extension of this, the RIT framework provides a systems-level view of the specific roles that individual actors can play within the broader processes of systemic innovation and transitions to sustainability. Indeed, it is widely agreed by scholars of transitions that multiple actors are usually involved in driving changes from one socio-technical system to another (Elzen, Geels et al. 2004). Furthermore, although my framework primarily provides insight into the roles of civil society in transition, there may be scope for thinking about how it could apply to other categories of actors, and which (if any) additional kinds of roles those other categories of actors can and do play.

Third, my work reveals how systemic perspectives – such as underlie the use of the MLP (Geels 2002) and related frameworks within the Transition Management and Strategic Niche Management research communities – can obfuscate both the intentions and activities of the actors involved. As explained above, the functional roles from my framework – which are the product of scholarly attempts to theorise transitions – do not correspond discretely to either the involved actors' own *espoused theories* (constructed in discourse) or their *theories-in-use* (constructed in practice) (Argyris and Schon 1974). Thus, if the four roles are mutually co-constitutive of a whole then it makes sense to consider the whole (systemic innovation) as an emergent property of the system, and not to expect direct correspondence with the intentions or activities of the actors involved. In other words, the view provided by the MLP suggests that the successor system is already envisaged – rather than emergent – and that the route is, to some extent, already planned out. However, I have shown that the dynamic and multivalent roles played by civil society

actors are simultaneously contributing to change, as well as responding to changes from elsewhere.

This supports Shove and Walkers' (2007) argument that extreme caution should be applied to any attempts made by scholars to develop tools and heuristics for steering changes towards sustainability in societal systems. The risk, as I have demonstrated, is that scholars forget their own positionality within the systems they study and assume that their analytical framings of the situation are neutral with respect to the alternative views of the actors involved. I drew attention to this from the outset by labelling this tendency as a 'systems-level (or spectator) view'.

Fourth, my work raises questions about the attribution of agency in studies of transition by showing how certain activities and actors are enrolled and instrumentalised by others, making it difficult to know who is actually innovating and driving the change. In all three cases I found that the categories of actors carrying out practices associated with grassroots innovation – as well as those using and benefitting from niche development activities – include many different types (in addition to CSOs or 'local projects'), and that they come together in ways that eschew easy analytical hierarchies such as implied by the levels of the MLP. As I explained, this highlights a need for transitions scholars to treat analytical categories such as 'local project', 'intermediary', 'global niche', and so on, openly, but to pay close attention to how they are bounded and constituted in different empirical contexts. It also responds to existing calls from transitions scholars for a better treatment of actors and agency in the MLP (Markard and Truffer 2008: 609).

Fifth, my work provides detailed empirical characterisation of the activities, practices, techniques and technologies, relationships with other CSOs and state and market actors, and styles of governance and management, as well as the stated intentions, of CSOs engaged in attempts to make food systems more sustainable in the UK. Moreover – though not a focal matter for this thesis – the empirical material presented in CHAPTER 2, CHAPTER 7, CHAPTER 8 and CHAPTER 9 provides valuable insight into the development of the biodynamic, organic and local food niches in the UK since the inter-war period.

Civil Society

Here, my work contributes to scholarship on civil society by supporting theories about the internal structure and dynamics of CSOs (Anheier 2000)⁶⁴, the relative positioning of CSOs with respect to each other and within dynamic external landscapes (Macmillan 2011), and the nested structuring of networks within civil society at large (Salamon and Anheier 1997, Anheier 2000, Alcock 2010, Food Ethics Council 2011). It also makes a contribution to wider theoretical debates within academic fields such as Voluntary (and Third) Sector Studies, about the roles of civil society actors in processes of broad social change. As I explained in chapters three and four, scholars studying civil society within these fields have not made much use of frameworks that explain societal-level change processes, tending instead to use micro-social frameworks for understanding the agency of civil society actors. Thus, I believe that it would be fruitful to transfer some of the theoretical insights from the Sustainability Transitions literature into this field – and the empirical focus of my thesis creates a strong rationale for doing so. In this regard, it is encouraging that a paper presentation of these findings received much interest at a conference of the Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN) at Sheffield Hallam University in September 2013⁶⁵ (Durrant 2013b).

Alternative Food Networks

By providing improved frameworks for understanding how civil society actors seek to drive change towards sustainability in food systems, my work indirectly contributes towards scholarly understandings of the different configurations of sustainable food provisioning known as Alternative (and Civic) Food Networks (AFNs/CFNs). Though not a central point in my thesis, the explanation provided by AFN scholars about the establishment and proliferation of alternative systems (such as the biodynamic, organic and local food systems that featured in my case studies) does bear out in my findings. For

⁶⁴ Anheier's study was of non-profit organisations (NPOs), which represent a subset of CSOs.

⁶⁵ The VSSN "functions to promote the advancement of knowledge about and understanding of, organisations between the market and the state". Voluntary Sector Studies Network. (2011). "Aims." Retrieved 20th February, 2014, from <http://www.vssn.org.uk/about/aims>.

scholars of AFNs, this upsurge in alternative food provision is underpinned by a ‘turn to quality’ in the way that food is valued by citizens and consumers (Goodman and Goodman 2009: 2), as well as a crisis of trust in the politics and governance of food systems (Whatmore, Stassart et al. 2003). In my case studies the qualities associated with alternative food systems and their governance, as well as the evaluative criteria and practices of incumbent food regimes – especially regarding their integrity and trustworthiness – were central to my own explanations of the intentions and activities of the organisations involved, as well as *their own* explanations.

Furthermore, I would argue that the detailed analysis that I provided using the RIT framework would be of interest and possible utility to AFN scholars seeking to further unpack these dynamic relationships between AFNs and conventional food regimes (e.g. Sonnino and Marsden 2006), not to mention those scholars, like Renting et al. (2012), who seek deeper understanding of the active involvement of citizens within AFNs. As with the field Voluntary (and Third) Sector Studies, I have already had positive feedback on papers and presentations that I made at four conferences convening AFN scholars from the fields of Rural Sociology, Planning, Geography and Food Studies (Durrant 2011, Durrant 2012a, Durrant 2012b, Durrant 2013a).

11.2.2 Policy and practice

The main purpose of this thesis was to improve understanding of the topic rather than to offer advice to policymakers and practitioners. Nonetheless, I hope to make a contribution towards the aims of the Sustainable Lifestyles Research Group (SLRG), which is the wider research project within which this thesis was originally conceived and funded, see chapter one, section 1.0 – by providing a robust analysis of the topic to policy-makers and suggesting some “realistic strategies to encourage more sustainable lifestyles” (Sustainable Lifestyles Research Group 2012). Hence, I will consider how my work can inform both strategies for achieving change (aimed at practitioners) and strategies for supporting change (aimed at policy-makers, particularly Defra and the Scottish Government who have provided much of the SLRG’s funding).

With respect to *achieving change*, in their recent review of civil society action on food and farming in the UK, the Food Ethics Council summed up the contribution of the 322 CSOs that took part in their survey as follows:

“The focus seems to be on filling holes left in a food system dominated by the private and public sectors, ahead of working to influence and change that system”
(Food Ethics Council 2011: 89).

However, in this thesis I have drawn attention to the ways that civil society actors can and do influence changes to food systems. Thus, I will encourage practitioners to reflect on my findings and consider how they can inform and inspire forward-looking strategies for achieving change⁶⁶. For, although it is clear that my work cannot provide a blueprint achieving change, it can enrich practitioners’ appreciation and understanding of the different strategies adopted by CSOs.

For instance, in the face of current financial pressures many CSOs are making decisions to reallocate scarce resources towards revenue-generating activities, putting other kinds of activities at risk. In terms of the RIT framework, this could result in CSOs increasingly undertaking ‘constructive’ kinds of activities related to niche development and regime reform – such as the creation of knowledge, networks, infrastructures and regulatory systems, which are services that can potentially generate revenue – whilst de-prioritising the more experimental and controversial, or ‘deconstructive’, activities related to grassroots innovation and normative contestation – such as trialling new techniques, responding to local problems, campaigning against incumbent practices and lobbying for policy change, which are traditionally funded through charitable donations of various sorts. However, my work would *not* support this strategy, since (as I have shown) the individual successes of all these different kinds of activities – in terms of achieving change – are mutually co-dependent. In other words, organisations enacting niche development and regime reform are most effective when the other two roles (grassroots innovation

⁶⁶ I aim to deliver this in practice through the production of a glossy, digested version of my thesis which I will disseminate via the Food Research Collaboration, which is an interdisciplinary initiative to connect academics and CSOs working on food-related issues. I will also give public seminars to promote the report.

and normative contestation) are also in operation, so it would be a false economy to drop those other two roles and focus only on the former. This advice is summarised, alongside other specific points of guidance, within Table 28 below.

Table 28. “Effective strategies for achieving change...”

“...Embrace”	“...Eschew”
A variety of different approaches for achieving change – including those that encompass both constructive and deconstructive types of activities.	Attempts to streamline or focus narrowly on a single approach, i.e. at the cost of losing synergies between diverse activities.
Experimentation and adaptation of strategic priorities in response to internal and external developments.	(Over-)commitment to long-term strategic plans without significant flexibility built in.
Formal and informal collaboration with other CSOs, public institutions and businesses, in ways that harness synergies between the different roles in transition.	Operating within silos, or shutting potential partners out of the process.
Different banners and guises for communicating to different audiences.	Top-down framings of the change that is sought and the methods adopted.
Ongoing development of internal arrangements to support the scale of changes sought and the particular roles in transition enacted.	Internal arrangements that are unsupportive and/or inflexible to changing demands.

With respect to *supporting change*, I have followed Power (Power 1994) and Slater and Aiken (2014) by arguing that discussions within policy circles around how civil society actors contribute towards sustainability in food systems often focus inappropriately on the question of how much food, of improved sustainability credentials, they are directly involved in producing (see CHAPTER 2, section 2.1.1). In addition to ignoring a great variety of direct and indirect influences related to food consumption, civic involvement in food systems and food activism, this also leaves policy-makers ignorant of the *different forms of systemic innovation* through which CSOs influence food provision on multiple levels and contribute towards sustainability in both new and existing food systems.

Making sure that policy-makers are aware of this important contribution is therefore one of my main points of advice. Another point of advice for policy-makers is for them to recognise the mutually reinforcing nature of the different innovative roles that CSOs play in transition, and to acknowledge that there is no silver bullet where civil society is concerned. Hence, policy should seek to support a diversity of approaches, viewing innovation in terms of systems dynamics, rather than focussing on the level of discrete initiatives. Above all, policy should avoid intervening in ways that might lead to homogenisation.

A related policy message from my thesis is about how to appropriately evaluate civil society activity. Given the complex, dynamic and emergent nature of the roles that civil society actors play in sustainability transitions, I agree with the authors of a recent report on social innovation for the European Commission (Science Communication Unit 2014), who argue that policy should aim to enable, rather than control, civil society innovation. Hence, I would suggest that support for civil society actors should not be linked to evaluation measures that would overly constrain the trajectories of the innovation processes involved. In practice, this could mean that on-going and adaptable process-based assessment by groups of peers is more appropriate than centrally-controlled outcome-based assessment using generic sets of indicators and metrics (Power 1994). Another policy suggestion from the authors of the EC report that resonates with my findings is, “to encourage federations, whilst ensuring the social innovative groups maintain their individuality and independence” (Science Communication Unit 2014: 37).

I have incorporated these messages in Table 29 below, as a rough guide to how policy actors can provide appropriate kinds of support for CSOs. These policy messages and suggestions will form part of a separate report for the project funders, for whom I will also deliver policy-focused seminars (i.e. for UK-policymakers in Westminster and the Scottish Government in Edinburgh). In addition, I could use and adapt the content to suit local and metropolitan authority contexts, as and when they arise.

Table 29. “Appropriate forms of support for CSOs...”

<i>“...Is open to them”</i>	<i>“...Doesn’t ask them to”</i>
Articulating and practising a variety of different strategies for achieving change simultaneously.	Adopt overly distinct or limited approaches to achieving change. Specify too many details of their role and function in wider change processes.
Adapting their approaches over time, as they respond to internal developments and the dynamic environments in which they operate.	Commit to long-term strategic plans unless there is significant flexibility built in, in a meaningful way.
Collaborating in a variety of ways, formally and informally, with other CSOs, public institutions and businesses.	Operate independently within silos, or shut potential partners out of the process.
Experimenting with different ways of providing food without necessarily producing much volume.	Deliver significant changes to food production and consumption at scale on their own/directly.
Contributing to sustainability in food systems under different banners and guises.	Adopt top-down framings of the change that they are seeking to achieve.

11.3 Limitations and further research

Despite my claims to answering my research questions, there are some limitations that I would like to have addressed but which were beyond the scope of the study. First, as indicated above, the approach that I adopted was not designed to explain the relative successes and failures of CSOs’ attempts to drive change in terms of measurable impacts or outcomes. This could, however, be addressed through further research, especially in collaboration with CSOs. Second, though I went to reasonable lengths to document the geographical, cultural and historical milieus of the three cases, I did not set out to provide a comprehensive account of the influence of these factors upon the roles adopted by different organisations. Thus, as an extension of my research – which uncovered the subtly different pathways that my three focal organisations created as they shifted position from role to role – quantitative techniques could potentially be used to reveal which, out of the various geographical, cultural and other related factors that I identified,

are of most significance in terms of enabling and constraining the successes of CSOs (i.e. in terms of enacting the different roles). Such an analysis could produce powerful tools for informing policy and practice (e.g. regarding how to better target support and create favourable conditions), so long as those tools were not overly systematising, but were instead process-based, adaptable and benchmarked against CSOs' own intended roles and impacts.

A further limitation of my research comes from the deductive aspect of my methodology. Rather than prioritising inductive 'discovery' of distinguishable kinds of roles that civil society actors play in transitions in an entirely open-ended way (which would anyhow have invited its own difficulties – see below), I instead framed the study with a typology deduced from existing research. Moreover, despite my best efforts, it is possible that the initial deductive framing may not constitute a comprehensive model. Nonetheless, I used this typology to guide my analysis of the three cases, paying attention to signs that it might be inaccurate or incomplete. The consequence of this, therefore, is that the four roles identified in the RIT framework cannot be claimed to offer an exhaustive guide.

Then again, I chose to adopt this deductive approach for the following reason. If I had gone straight into the field looking for transition-related activities without using the RIT framework, even an ostensibly 'open-ended' approach would (if only tacitly) have been influenced by some theoretical commitments, highlighting particular activities as being 'transition-related' and obscuring those held not to be. However, though certain organisational activities seem to be largely unrelated to transition – such as accounting, recruitment, office management, and so on – it is possible to do any of them in an innovative, more sustainable way (or indeed in a disruptive, transformational way). And as I have shown, the intentions of the civil society actors are often plural, contested, and only indirectly related to their activities, meaning that intentionality cannot be the distinguishing factor of transition-related (cf. non-transition-related) activities.

Thus, my RIT framework itself, which draws together different *scholarly* interpretations of civil society roles in transition and characterises them in general terms, provides as best a

guide as I've found on the matter of what kinds of civil society activities are transition-related (although it doesn't suggest which kinds are not). And despite being deduced from previous research, rather than induced directly from my empirical cases, my study design – in which I not only empirically characterised the roles using evidence from my cases, but also investigated how specific organisations enact them and whether/how they correspond to CSOs' own understandings of the change they are trying to achieve – ensured a reasonable level of openness towards my empirical cases, as well as reflexivity towards my framework.

Aside from these limitations, I would conclude that the RIT framework offers a powerful and provocative tool to analyse how civil society actors relate to the key processes involved in transitions, and what meanings they attribute to them. Thus, there may be other settings in which this approach could be used, as well as certain parts of the analysis that deserve further attention. First, though it was only a relatively small part of the thesis, my investigation of the regime reform role in chapter eight led to some interesting findings about how alternative practices are embedded in regime contexts and about the different kinds of negotiations involved, which could represent a fruitful addition to the Sustainability Transitions literature. However, this would need to be investigated in more detail before such claims could be made robustly. Thus, I suggest that the concepts relating to this role might be subject to in-depth exploration through a comparative case study along the lines that I developed around the SA's production standards and catering mark (see CHAPTER 9, section 9.1.1.4).

Second, I would suggest that further research into both (1) the synergies and tensions that arise from the *interactions between actors* involved in sustainability transitions, and (2) the management of synergies and tensions *within organisations* with complex internal structures/complex missions, could aid scholarly understandings of how to accelerate transitions to sustainability. The analytical concepts that I used within this thesis – including Anheier's (2000) 'tents' and 'palaces' and MacMillan's (2011) 'strategic positioning', as well as the RIT framework itself – proved useful for explaining some of the synergies and tensions that I discovered within my three cases, and could therefore be a

starting place for further empirical research and theory development on this topic⁶⁷. In particular, my hypothesis that the tendencies of CSOs towards being either more *palace-like* (through the elaboration of internal hierarchies) or more *tent-like* (by keeping an agile, networked structure) conditions their abilities to perform the different roles in transition in particular ways (see Figure 31), deserves more attention.

Third, as far as I am aware there is no reason why the RIT framework could not be used to explore any situation in which civil society actors are engaged in attempts to drive change in socio-technical systems, from health care to finance. In fact, it would be interesting to discover how the specific elements of the systems targeted and categories of actors engaged through the four roles would vary from one system to another. Moreover, although the RIT framework was developed for studying civil society actors, I believe that there is scope for thinking about how it could be applied to other categories of actors, and which (if any) additional kinds of roles those other actors might play in transitions.

⁶⁷ For instance, I will take these concepts forward in my new role as a Research Fellow on the Accelerating and Rescaling Transitions to Sustainability (ARTS) project, which explores how the agency dynamics that play out between different kinds of sustainability transition initiatives can accelerate progress towards sustainability within selected urban regions.

References

- Abemathy, W. J. (1978). The Productivity Dilemma: Roadblock to Innovation in the Automobile Industry. Baltimore, The John Hopkins Press.
- Alcock, P. (2010). "A strategic unity: defining the third sector in the UK." Voluntary Sector Review **1**(1): 5-24.
- Alcock, P. (2012). "New Policy Spaces: The Impact of Devolution on Third Sector Policy in the UK." Social Policy & Administration **46**(2): 219-238.
- AMEC Environment & Infrastructure UK Limited (2012). Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Revocation of the South East Regional Strategy. Department of Communities and Local Government. London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office,.
- Anheier, H. K. (2000). Managing non-profit organisations: Towards a new approach, Centre for Civil Society, London School of Economics and Political Science.
- Argyris, C. and D. A. Schon (1974). Theory in practice: Increasing professional effectiveness. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- AssureWel (2013). About AssureWel. Bristol, Soil Association, RSPCA and University of Bristol.
- Atkins, P. and I. Bowler (2001). Food in society: economy, culture, geography, Arnold, Hodder Headline Group.
- Avelino, F. (2011). Power in Transition: Empowering Discourses on Sustainability Transitions Ph.D. thesis, Erasmus University Rotterdam.
- Avelino, F. and J. Rotmans (2009). "Power in Transition: An Interdisciplinary Framework to Study Power in Relation to Structural Change." European Journal of Social Theory **12**(4): 543-569.
- Barling, D. (2011). "The UK Government's Food Policy: from tentative integration to policy confinement". Where is UK Food Policy going? Cass Business School, City University, London, Centre for Food Policy.
- Barling, D. and T. Lang (2010). "Food policy in the UK: Reflections on Food 2030, its past and future." Food Ethics **5**(2): 4.
- Bateman, L. (2013). Sustainable food: will the horsemeat scandal reverse the slide in organic sales? GreenWise. London, The Sixty Mile Publishing Company.
- Batty, D. (2011). David Cameron in danger of breaking green pledge, warn green groups. The Guardian, GNM.
- Bazeley, P. (2007). Qualitative data analysis with NVivo. London, Sage.
- Beddington, J. (2009). "Food, Energy, Water and the Climate: a Perfect Storm of Global Events? Speech given at 'Sustainable Development UK 09', QEII Conference Centre, 19th March." Retrieved 1st March, 2013, from <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.bis.gov.uk/go-science/government-chief-scientific-adviser/speeches-and-interviews>.
- Benford, R. D. and D. A. Snow (2000). "Framing processes and social movements: an overview and assessment." Annual Review of Sociology **26**: 611-639.

- Berkhout, F. (2006). "Normative expectations in systems innovation." Technology Analysis & Strategic Management **18**(3-4): 299-311.
- Berkhout, F., A. Smith and A. Stirling (2004). "Socio-technological regimes and transition contexts." System innovation and the transition to sustainability: theory, evidence and policy. Edward Elgar, Cheltenham: 48-75.
- Biodynamic Agriculture Association (2004). Biodynamic Association: Annual Report 2004. Stroud, Biodynamic Agriculture Association.
- Biodynamic Agriculture Association. (2013a). "Aims and Objectives: The Biodynamic Association (BDA)." Retrieved 24/05/13, 2013, from <http://www.biodynamic.org.uk/about-bdaa/aims-and-objectives.html>.
- Blythman, J. (2009). Gimme Fife! The Observer. London, Guardian News and Media Limited.
- Bows, A., E. Dawkins, C. Gough, S. Mander, C. McLachlan, M. Röder, L. Thom, P. Thornley and R. Wood (2012). What's Cooking? Adaptation & mitigation in the UK food system. A report prepared by the Sustainable Consumption Institute at The University of Manchester, UK.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development. London, Sage.
- Brooks, M., C. Foster, M. Holmes and J. Wiltshire (2011). "Does consuming seasonal foods benefit the environment? Insights from recent research." Nutrition Bulletin **36**(4): 449-453.
- Brown, N., B. Rappert and A. Webster (2000). Introducing contested futures: from looking into the future to looking at the future. Contested futures: A sociology of prospective techno-science: 3-20.
- Browning, H. (2012). Helen Browning, Chief Executive of the Soil Association, Opening address at the Soil Association annual conference 2012 "Facing the future: Innovation in food and farming", 02 March, London. Online.
- Browning, H., G. Tansey, E. Dowler, C. Ritson and C. Clutterbuck (2012). Unaudited financial statements for the year ended 4 January 2012. Brighton, Food Ethics Council.
- Brunori, G. (2011). Keynote address: "From alternative food chains to community food systems". 3rd AESOP Sustainable Food Planning: Thematic Group Meeting. Cardiff, UK.
- Bruntland, G. (1987). Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. Oxford, Oxford University Press,.
- Buck, D., C. Getz and J. Guthman (1997). "From Farm to Table: The Organic Vegetable Commodity Chain of Northern California." Sociologia Ruralis **37**(1): 3-20.
- Buttel, F. H. (1997). Some observations on agro-food change and the future of agricultural sustainability movements. Globalising food: agrarian questions and global restructuring. D. Goodman and M. Watts. London, Routledge: 344-365.
- Cabinet Office Strategy Unit (2008). Food Matters: Towards a Strategy for the 21st Century. C. Office. London, Crown Copyright.
- Carpenter-Boggs, L., A. C. Kennedy and J. P. Reganold (2000). "Organic and biodynamic management effects on soil biology." Soil Science Society of America Journal **64**(5): 1651-1659.

- Clarke, A. (2005). Situational analysis: grounded theory after the postmodern turn. Thousand Oaks, California., Sage Publications.
- Coffey, A. and P. Atkinson (1996). Making sense of qualitative data analysis: Complementary strategies. Thousand Oaks, Sage.
- Compassion in World Farming (2012). Getting things done: Annual review 2011/12. Godalming, UK, Compassion in World Farming.
- Compassion in World Farming. (2013a). "The Leading Farm Animal Welfare Charity." Retrieved 8th October, 2013, from http://www.ciwf.org.uk/about_us/default.aspx.
- Compassion in World Farming (2013b). Strategic Plan 2013-2017: for kinder, fairer farming worldwide. Godalming, Compassion in World Farming.
- Conford, P. and P. Holden (2007). The Soil Association. Organic Farm: An International History. W. Lockeretz. Oxford, CABI International.
- Cotula, L., S. Vermeulen, R. Leonard and J. Keeley (2009). Land grab or development opportunity? Agricultural investment and international land deals in Africa. London/Rome, FAO, IIED, IFAD.
- Curry Commission (2002). Farming and Food – A Sustainable Future. Report of the Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food. C. Office. London.
- Dahle, K. (2007). "When do transformative initiatives really transform? A typology of different paths for transition to a sustainable society." Futures **39**(5): 487-504.
- Daintith, T. and A. C. Page (1999). The Executive in the Constitution: Structure, Autonomy, and Internal Control. Oxford, Oxford University Press
- Davidson, S., C. D. Martin and S. Treanor (2009). Scottish Environmental Attitudes and Behaviours Survey 2008: Technical Report. Edinburgh, Scottish Government Social Research.
- DCLG (2011). Community orchards case studies. Department for Communities and Local Government. London, Crown copyright.
- DCLG (2012). National Planning Policy Framework. Department for Communities and Local Government. London, Crown copyright.
- de Haan, J. H. and J. Rotmans (2011). "Patterns in transitions: Understanding complex chains of change." Technological Forecasting and Social Change **78**(1): 90-102.
- Deakin, N. (2001). In search of civil society, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Defra (2011a). Farm Diversification in England: Results from the Farm Business Survey, 2009/10. Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs. London, Crown Copyright.
- Defra. (2011b). "New Government Buying Standards for food and catering." SD Scene Retrieved 10th June, 2013.
- Defra (2012c). Food Statistics Pocketbook 2012. Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs. York, Crown Copyright.
- Defra (2013). The Farm Business Survey 2011/12. Rural Business Research. Cambridge, Crown Copyright.
- Demeter-International. (2012). "Statistics." from <http://www.demeter.net/statistics>.
- Demeter-International. (2013). "What is Demeter? History." Retrieved 16th January, 2014, from <http://www.demeter.net/what-is-demeter/history>.
- Demeter USA (2009). Organic vs. Biodynamic. Online, Demeter USA.

- Department of Health (2004). Health Check on the State of Public Health: Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer 2003. D. o. Health. London, Department of Health Publications.
- Dexter, L. A. (1970). Elite and specialized interviewing. Evanston, Northwestern University Press.
- Durrant, R. (2011). Civil Society in Sustainability Transitions of Food Systems. AESOP 3rd Sustainable Food Planning Thematic Group Meeting. Cardiff University.
- Durrant, R. (2012a). Can civil society be a key to unlocking food system transitions? Place to Plate. Cardiff University.
- Durrant, R. (2012b). Can civil society be a key to unlocking food system transitions? British Sociological Association's Food Study Group Annual Conference. British Library Conference Centre.
- Durrant, R. (2013a). Civil society in transitions to sustainable food. XXVth Congress of the European Society for Rural Sociology, "Rural resilience and vulnerability: The rural as locus of solidarity and conflict in times of crisis". Laboratorio di studi rurali SISMONDI, Pisa (Italy).
- Durrant, R. (2013b). Exploring the roles played by UK-based civil society organisations in the transformation of food systems towards sustainability. Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Research Conference. Sheffield Hallam University.
- Edwards, M. (2009). Civil Society. Cambridge, Polity.
- Ehrlich, P. R. (1995). The scale of the human enterprise and biodiversity loss. Extinction rates. J. H. a. M. Lawton, R. M. . New York, Oxford University Press.
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). "Building Theories from Case Study Research." Academy of Management Review **14**(4): 532-550.
- Elzen, B., F. W. Geels and K. Green (2004). System innovation and the transition to sustainability: theory, evidence and policy, Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Elzen, B., F. W. Geels, C. Leeuwis and B. van Mierlo (2011). "Normative contestation in transitions 'in the making': Animal welfare concerns and system innovation in pig husbandry." Research Policy **40**(2): 263-275.
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. (2013). "What we fund: Search grants." Retrieved 12th June, 2013, from http://esmeefairbairn.org.uk/what-we-fund/search-grants/results/#gfind_queryinfo.
- Ethical Consumer. (No date). "UK green procurement up in smoke?" Retrieved 7th August, 2014, from <http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/ethicalcampaigns/taxjusticecampaign/ethicalprocurement/ukgreenprocurementupinsmoke.aspx>.
- Evers, A. (2013). "The concept of 'civil society': different understandings and their implications for third sector policies." Voluntary Sector Review **4**(2): 149-164.
- Featherstone, D., A. Ince, D. Mackinnon, K. Strauss and A. Cumbers (2012). "Progressive localism and the construction of political alternatives." Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers **37**(2): 177-182.
- Fife Diet. (2009). "The Fife Diet Consitution in full." Retrieved 19th June, 2013, from <http://www.fifediet.wildapricot.org/Default.aspx?pageId=753001>.

- Fife Diet. (No date). "About Us." Retrieved 19th June, 2013, from <http://www.fifediet.co.uk/about-us/>.
- Food Ethics Council (2011). The food issues census: A survey of UK civil society. Brighton, Food Ethics Council.
- Food for Life Partnership (2011). Good Food for All: The impact of the Food for Life Partnership. Bristol, Food for Life Partnership.
- Food for Life Partnership. (2013). "What is the Food for Life Partnership?" Retrieved 23rd August, 2013, from <http://www.foodforlife.org.uk/Whygetinvolved/WhatisFoodforLife.aspx>.
- Food Sovereignty now! (2013). "UK groups and partners." Retrieved 17th June, 2013, from <http://foodsovereignty.org.uk/ukfoodsov/uk-groups-and-partners/>.
- Foresight (2007). Tackling Obesities: Future Choices – Project Report. Government Office for Science. Online.
- Foresight. The Future of Food and Farming (2011). Final Project Report. T. G. O. f. Science. London.
- Friedmann, H. (1993). "The Political Economy of Food: a Global Crisis." *New Left Review* **197**: 29-57.
- Fynes-Clinton, O. (2013). Annual Return and Accounts 2011/12. *AR 30 - Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965 Form*. Mutuals Public Register, Financial Conduct Authority.
- Garden Organic. (2013a). "The history of Garden Organic." Retrieved 8th October, 2013, from http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/about_us/history.php.
- Garden Organic. (2013b). "What We Do in the International Programme." Retrieved 8th October, 2013, from http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/international_programme/index.php.
- Garden Organic. (2013c). "Farming, growing and research." Retrieved 8th July, 2013, from <http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/research/index.php>.
- Garnett, T. (2008). *Cooking up a storm: Food, greenhouse gas emissions and our changing climate*. Surrey, Food Climate Research Network.
- Garnett, T. (2009). "Livestock-related greenhouse gas emissions: impacts and options for policy makers." *Environmental Science & Policy* **12**: 491-530.
- Garnett, T. and C. Godfray (2012). Sustainable intensification in agriculture. Navigating a course through competing food system priorities. Oxford, Food Climate Research Network and the Oxford Martin Programme on the Future of Food, University of Oxford.
- Garton, J. (2009). *The regulation of organised civil society*. Oxford, Hart Publishing.
- Geels, F. and J. J. Deuten (2006). "Local and global dynamics in technological development: a socio-cognitive perspective on knowledge flows and lessons from reinforced concrete." *Science and Public Policy* **33**(4): 265-275.
- Geels, F. and R. Raven (2006). "Non-linearity and Expectations in Niche-Development Trajectories: Ups and Downs in Dutch Biogas Development (1973–2003)." *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management* **18**(3-4): 375-392.
- Geels, F. and B. Verhees (2011). "Cultural legitimacy and framing struggles in innovation journeys: A cultural-performative perspective and a case study of Dutch nuclear energy (1945–1986)." *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* **78**(6): 910-930.

- Geels, F. W. (2002). "Technological transitions as evolutionary reconfig processes: a multi-level perspective and a case-study." Research Policy **31**: 1257–1274.
- Geels, F. W. (2004b). "Understanding system innovations: a critical literature review and a conceptual synthesis." System innovation and the transition to sustainability: Theory, evidence and policy: 19-47.
- Geels, F. W. (2011). "The multi-level perspective on sustainability transitions: Responses to seven criticisms." Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions **1**(1): 24-40.
- Geels, F. W. (2014). "Reconceptualising the co-evolution of firms-in-industries and their environments: Developing an inter-disciplinary Triple Embeddedness Framework." Research Policy **43**(2): 261-277.
- Geels, F. W. (Forthcoming). "Grand societal challenges and industry-environment interactions: Developing a multi-dimensional Triple Embeddedness Framework." Research Policy.
- Geels, F. W., M. P. Hekkert and S. Jacobsson (2008). "The dynamics of sustainable innovation journeys." Technology Analysis & Strategic Management **20**(5): 521-536.
- Geels, F. W. and J. Schot (2007). "Typology of sociotechnical transition pathways." Research policy **36**(3): 399-417.
- Genus, A. and A.-M. Coles (2008). "Rethinking the multi-level perspective of technological transitions." Research Policy **37**(9): 1436-1445.
- Gill, E. (2010). The impact of the early British organic movement's anti-science bias and New Age religious beliefs on relations with agricultural scientists and policy makers. Oxford-Nagoya Environmental History seminar: The Environmental Histories of Europe and Japan. Nagoya University, Japan.
- Gill, M. and K. Johnston (2010). "Session 2 Informing food policy: balancing the evidence." Proceedings of the Nutrition Society **69**(4): 621-627.
- Goodman, D. (2003). "The quality 'turn' and alternative food practices: reflections and agenda." Journal of Rural Studies **19**(1): 1-7.
- Goodman, D. (2009). "Place and space in alternative food networks: Connecting production and consumption." Environment, politics and development working paper **21**.
- Goodman, D. and M. Goodman (2009). Alternative food networks. International Encyclopedia of Human Geography. R. Kitchin and N. Thrift. Oxford, Elsevier.
- Goodman, D., M. Goodman and M. DuPuis (2011). Alternative food networks: knowledge, place and politics, Routledge, Taylor & Francis.
- Grin, J., J. Rotmans and J. Schot (2010). Transitions to sustainable development: New directions in the study of long term transformative change, Routledge.
- Guthman, J. (2004). "Back to the land: the paradox of organic food standards." Environment and Planning A **36**: 511-528.
- Hargreaves, T., S. Hielscher, G. Seyfang and A. Smith (2013). "Grassroots innovations in community energy: The role of intermediaries in niche development." Global Environmental Change **23**(5): 868-880.
- Hassanein, N. (2003). "Practicing food democracy: a pragmatic politics of transformation." Journal of Rural Studies **19**(1): 77-86.

- Hassink, J., J. Grin and W. Hulsink (2013). "Multifunctional Agriculture Meets Health Care: Applying the Multi-Level Transition Sciences Perspective to Care Farming in the Netherlands." Sociologia Ruralis **53**(2): 223-245.
- Hess, D. J. (2005). "Technology-and Product-Oriented Movements: Approximating Social Movement Studies and Science and Technology Studies." Science, Technology & Human Values **30**(4): 515-535.
- Hinrichs, C. C. (2003). "The practice and politics of food system localization." Journal of Rural Studies **19**(1): 33-45.
- HM Government (2009). UK Food Security Assessment: Our Approach. Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs. London, Stationary Office.
- HM Government (2010b). Food 2030. Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs. London, The Stationery Office.
- Holding, J., J. Carr and K. Stark (2012). Food Statistics Pocketbook 2012. F. a. R. A. Department for Environment. York, Crown Copyright.
- Hole, D., A. Perkins, J. Wilson, I. Alexander, P. Grice and A. Evans (2005). "Does organic farming benefit biodiversity?" Biological conservation **122**(1): 113-130.
- House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee (2012). Sustainable Food: Eleventh Report of Session 2010–12 London, The Stationery Office Limited. **Volume I**.
- Howaldt, J., M. Schwarz, K. Henning and F. Hees (2010). Social Innovation: Concepts, research fields and international trends, IMA/ZLW.
- Hutchens, A. (2011). "Playing games of governance: How and why Fair Trade pioneers evade corporate capture." Regulation & Governance **5**(2): 221-240.
- Ilbery, B. and M. Kneafsey (2000). "Producer constructions of quality in regional speciality food production: a case study from south west England." Journal of Rural Studies **16**(2): 217-230.
- Jacobs, M. (1999). Sustainable Development as a Contested Concept. Fairness and Futurity: Essays on Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice. A. Dobson. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Jas, P., K. Wilding, S. Wainwright, A. Passey and L. Hems (2002). The UK Civil Society Almanac. London, NCVO.
- Kearney, J. (2010). "Food consumption trends and drivers." Philosophical transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B, Biological sciences **365**(1554): 2793-2807.
- Keep Scotland Beautiful. (2013). "About CCF: What it is." Retrieved 17th June, 2013, from <http://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/sustainability-climate-change/climate-challenge-fund/about-ccf/what-it-is/>.
- Kemp, R., F. Avelino and N. Bressers (2011). "Transition management as a model for sustainable mobility." European Transport/Trasporti Europei **47**: 1-22.
- Kemp, R., J. Schot and R. Hoogma (1998). "Regime shifts to sustainability through processes of niche formation: The approach of strategic niche management." Technology Analysis & Strategic Management **10**(2): 175-198.
- Kern, F. and A. Smith (2008). "Restructuring energy systems for sustainability? Energy transition policy in the Netherlands." Energy Policy **36**(11): 4093-4103.

- Kirwan, J., B. Ilbery, D. Maye and J. Carey (2013). "Grassroots social innovations and food localisation: An investigation of the Local Food programme in England." Global Environmental Change **23**(5): 830-837.
- Kirwan, J. and D. Maye (2013). "Food security framings within the UK and the integration of local food systems." Journal of Rural Studies **29**(0): 91-100.
- Knuutila, A. and H. Kersley (2011). *The Benefits of Procuring School Meals through the Food for Life Partnership: An economic analysis*. London, New Economics Foundation.
- Koc, M. (2010). *Sustainability: A Tool for Food System Reform? Imagining Sustainable Food Systems: Theory and Practice*. A. Blay-Palmer, Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.
- Kvale, S. (1996). Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing. Thousand Oaks, Sage.
- Lang, T. (2010). "From value-for-money' to values-for-money'? Ethical food and policy in Europe." Environment and Planning A **42**: 1814-1832.
- Lang, T., S. Dibb and S. Reddy (2011). *Looking Back, Looking Forward: Sustainability and UK Food Policy 2000-2011*. S. D. Commission. London.
- Lang, T. and M. Heasman (2004). Food wars: the global battle for mouths, minds and markets, Earthscan/James & James.
- Latour, B. (1987). Science in action: How to follow scientists and engineers through society. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.
- Leat, P., C. Revoredo-Giha and C. Lamprinopoulou (2011). "Scotland's Food and Drink Policy Discussion: Sustainability Issues in the Food Supply Chain." Sustainability **3**(4): 605-631.
- Little, R., D. Maye and B. Ilbery (2010). "Collective purchase: moving local and organic foods beyond the niche market." Environment and planning. A **42**(8): 1797.
- Lorand, A. C. (1996). Biodynamic Agriculture: a paradigmatic analysis. Doctoral Dissertation: Condensed Version., The Pennsylvania State University.
- Macaulay Land Use Research Institute. (2013). "Exploring Scotland: Land Capability for Agriculture." Retrieved 20th June, 2013, from <http://www.macaulay.ac.uk/explorescotland/lca.html>.
- Macmillan, R. (2011). "Seeing things differently? The promise of qualitative longitudinal research on the third sector." Third Sector Research Centre Working Paper Series **56**.
- Macmillan, R. (2013a). "Decoupling the state and the third sector? The 'big Society' as a spontaneous order." Third Sector Research Centre Working Paper Series **WP 101**.
- Macmillan, R. (2013b). "Making sense of the Big Society: perspectives from the third sector." Third Sector Research Centre Working Paper Series **WP 90**.
- Macmillan, R., M. Arvidson, S. Edwards, A. Soteri-Proctor, R. Taylor and S. Teasdale (2011). "First impressions: introducing the 'Real Times' third sector case studies." Third Sector Research Centre Working Paper Series **67**.
- Magdoff, F., F. H. Buttel and J. B. Foster (1998). Hungry for Profit: Agriculture, Food, and Ecology.
- Marine Stewardship Council. (2013a). "MSC in numbers." Retrieved 8th October, 2013, from <http://www.msc.org/business-support/key-facts-about-msc>.
- Markard, J., R. Raven and B. Truffer (2012). "Sustainability transitions: An emerging field of research and its prospects." Research Policy **41**(6): 955-967.

- Markard, J. and B. Truffer (2008). "Technological innovation systems and the multi-level perspective: Towards an integrated framework." Research Policy **37**(4): 596-615.
- Marsden, T. (2012). Third Natures? Reconstituting Space through Place-making Strategies for Sustainability. Food security. XXIV Congress of the European Society for Rural Sociology, Chania, Crete, Greece, August 2011, Research Committee on Sociology of Agriculture and Food (RC40),.
- Marsden, T. (2013). "From post-productionism to reflexive governance: Contested transitions in securing more sustainable food futures." Journal of Rural Studies **29**(0): 123-134.
- Marshall, C. (No date). Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch CSA. Bristol, Soil Association.
- Maye, D. and J. Kirwan (2013). "Food security: A fractured consensus." Journal of Rural Studies **29**: 1-6.
- McCarthy, J. D. and M. N. Zald (1977). "Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory." American Journal of Sociology: 1212-1241.
- McCracken, E. (2008). So what can Scotland do to help? Eat local. Herald Scotland. Cambuslang, Herald & Times Group.
- McMichael, P. (2009a). "A food regime genealogy." The Journal of Peasant Studies **36**(1): 139-169.
- McMichael, P. (2009b). "A food regime analysis of the 'world food crisis'." Agriculture and Human Values **26**(4): 281-295.
- Michael, M. (2000). Futures of the present: From performativity to prehension. Contested futures: a sociology of prospective techno-science. N. Brown, B. Rappert and A. Webster. Aldershot, Ashgate: 21-39.
- Moore, R. and J. Cumpatescu (2009). Local Food Guide '09. Forest Row, Design to Print UK.
- Morgan, K. (2008). "Greening the realm: Sustainable food chains and the public plate." Regional Studies **42**(9): 1237-1250.
- Morgan, K. (2010). "Local and green, global and fair: the ethical foodscape and the politics of care." Environment and planning. A **42**(8): 1852.
- National Records of Scotland (2012). Fife Council Area - Demographic Fact Sheet. Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland.
- Naysmith, S. (2014). World-leading food project to 'abolish itself' due to success. Herald Scotland. Edinburgh, Herald & Times Group.
- Nelson, G. C., M. W. Rosegrant, J. Koo, R. Robertson, T. Sulser, T. Zhu, C. Ringler, S. Msangi, A. Palazzo, M. Batka, M. Magalhaes, R. Valmonte-Santos, M. Ewing and D. Lee (2009). Climate change: Impact on agriculture and costs of adaptation. Washington, D.C., International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).
- Norman, A. (2012). Cosmic flavour, spiritual nutrition?: The biodynamic agricultural method and the legacy of Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy in viticulture. Handbook of New Religions and Cultural Production. C. Cusack and A. Norman. Leiden, Brill. **4**.
- OED Online (2013). "agency, n.". Oxford University Press.
- Office of Communications (2004). Childhood Obesity: Food Advertising in Context. Children's food choices, parents understanding and influence, and the role of food promotion. O. o. Communications. London, OfCOM.
- Oliver, J. (2005). Jamie Oliver's School Dinners.

- Oliver, J. (2008). Ministry of Food: Jamie's Manifesto.
- Orme, J., M. Jones, R. Kimberlee, E. Weitkamp, D. Salmon, N. Dailami, M. Adrian and M. Kevin (2011). Food for life partnership evaluation: full report. U. o. t. W. o. England. Bristol.
- Oxford English Dictionary (2013). "role, n.", Oxford University Press.
- Pahl-Wostl, C. (2007). "Transitions towards adaptive management of water facing climate and global change." Water Resources Management **21**(1): 49-62.
- Parry, M. L., Canziani, O. F., Palutikof, J. P., Linden, P. J., & Hanson, C. E. (2007). Climate change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Summary for Policymakers. Geneva, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.
- Paton, R. (2009). "(Towards) a sedimentary theory of the third sector", Paper presented to the NCVO/VSSN Annual Research Conference, Warwick University."
- Penna, C. C. R. and F. W. Geels (2012). "Multi-dimensional struggles in the greening of industry: A dialectic issue lifecycle model and case study." Technological Forecasting and Social Change **79**(6): 999-1020.
- Perry, M. (2010). "Community-ownership: the big answer to the Big Society?" SD Scene Retrieved 11th June, 2013.
- Polletta, F. and J. M. Jasper (2001). "Collective identity and social movements." Annual Review of Sociology **27**: 283-305.
- Power, M. (1994). The audit explosion, Demos.
- Press Association (2013). How the horse meat scandal unfolded - timeline. The Guardian online. London, Guardian News Media.
- Raven, R. P. J. M., E. Heiskanen, R. Lovio, M. Hodson and B. Brohmann (2008). "The Contribution of Local Experiments and Negotiation Processes to Field-Level Learning in Emerging (Niche) Technologies: Meta-Analysis of 27 New Energy Projects in Europe." Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society **28**(6): 464-477.
- Ravenscroft, N. and R. Hanney (2011). Case Study Draft 4, 11th November 2011: Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch Community Farms, East Sussex, UK. Unpublished work.
- Ravenscroft, N., N. Moore, E. Welch and A. Church (2012). Connecting communities through food: the theoretical foundations of community supported agriculture in the UK. CRESC Working Paper Series. The University of Manchester, Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change (CRESC). **WP 115**.
- Renard, M.-C. (2003). "Fair trade: quality, market and conventions." Journal of Rural Studies **19**(1): 87-96.
- Renting, H., M. Schermer and A. Rossi (2012). "Building Food Democracy: Exploring Civic Food Networks and Newly Emerging Forms of Food Citizenship." International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food **19**(3 (Special Issue on Civic Food Networks)): 289-307.
- Ritchie, P. and T. Martinez (2010). Our Mutual Food. Falkland, Falkland Centre for Stewardship.
- Rohrer, F. (2007). Living on the Fife Diet. BBC News Magazine. London, BBC.
- Ross, A. (2012). Sustainable Development Law in the UK: from rhetoric to reality? Abingdon, Earthscan.

- Rotmans, J., R. Kemp and M. van Asselt (2001). "More evolution than revolution: transition management in public policy." foresight **3**(1): 15-31.
- Rotmans, J. and D. Loorbach (2010). "Towards a better understanding of transitions and their governance. A systemic and reflexive approach." Transitions to sustainable development–new directions in the study of long term transformation change. Routledge, New York: 105-220.
- Salamon, L. M. and H. K. Anheier (1997). Defining the nonprofit sector: a cross-national analysis, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Satterthwaite, D., G. McGranahan and C. Tacoli (2010). "Urbanization and its implications for food and farming." Philosophical transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B, Biological sciences **365**(1554): 2809-2820.
- Sayer, A. (1992). Method in social science: A realist approach. London, Routledge.
- Schenker, M. B. and S. Kirkhorn. (2001). "Human Health Effects of Agriculture: Physical Diseases and Illnesses." The National Agricultural Safety Database Retrieved 14th October, 2011.
- Schot, J. and F. W. Geels (2008). "Strategic niche management and sustainable innovation journeys: theory, findings, research agenda, and policy." Technology Analysis & Strategic Management **20**(5): 537-554.
- Scialabba, N. E.-H., C. Grandi and C. Henatsch (2003). Case Study No. 4 Organic Agriculture and Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Biodiversity and the Ecosystem Approach in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. N. E.-H. Scialabba. Rome, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.
- Science Communication Unit (2014). Science for Environment Policy In-depth Report: Social Innovation and the Environment. Bristol, University of the West of England.
- Scrinis, G. (2007). "From Techno-Corporate Food to Alternative Agri-Food Movements." Local Global **4**: 112-140.
- Seyfang, G. and A. Haxeltine (2012). "Growing grassroots innovations: exploring the role of community-based initiatives in governing sustainable energy transitions." Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy **30**(3): 381-400.
- Seyfang, G. and A. Smith (2007). "Grassroots innovations for sustainable development: Towards a new research and policy agenda." Environmental Politics **16**(4): 584-603.
- Shove, E. and G. Walker (2007). "CAUTION! Transitions ahead: politics, practice, and sustainable transition management." Environment and Planning A **39**(4): 763-770.
- Shove, E. and G. Walker (2010). "Governing transitions in the sustainability of everyday life." Research Policy **39**(4): 471-476.
- Simmonds, M. (2011). Simply Governance training event. University of Brighton, Making Local Food Work.
- Slater, R. and M. Aiken (2014). "Can't you Count? Public Service Delivery and Standardized Measurement Challenges – the Case of Community Composting." Public Management Review: 1-18.
- Smith, A. (2005). "The alternative technology movement: an analysis of its framing and negotiation of technology development." Human Ecology Review **12**(2): 106.
- Smith, A. (2006). "Green niches in sustainable development: the case of organic food in the United Kingdom." Environment and Planning C-Government and Policy **24**(3): 439-458.

- Smith, A. (2007). "Translating Sustainabilities between Green Niches and Socio-Technical Regimes." Technology Analysis & Strategic Management **19**(4): 427-450.
- Smith, A. (2012). Civil society in sustainable energy transitions. Governing the Energy Transition: reality, illusion or necessity. D. A. Loorbach and G. Verbong. New York, Routledge.
- Smith, A. and R. Raven (2012). "What is protective space? Reconsidering niches in transitions to sustainability." Research Policy **41**(6): 1025-1036.
- Smith, A. and G. Seyfang (2013). "Constructing grassroots innovations for sustainability." Global Environmental Change **23**(5): 827-829.
- Smith, A. and A. Stirling (2010). "The Politics of Social-ecological Resilience and Sustainable Sociotechnical Transitions." Ecology and Society **15**(1).
- Smith, A., A. Stirling and F. Berkhout (2005). "The governance of sustainable socio-technical transitions." Research Policy **34**(10): 1491-1510.
- Smith, A., J.-P. Voß and J. Grin (2010). "Innovation studies and sustainability transitions: The allure of the multi-level perspective and its challenges." Research Policy **39**(4): 435-448.
- Smith, P., P. J. Gregory, D. van Vuuren, M. Obersteiner, P. Havlik, M. Rounsevell, J. Woods, E. Stehfest and J. Bellarby (2010). "Competition for land." Philosophical transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B, Biological sciences **365**(1554): 2941-2957.
- Soil Association (2011a). The impact of community supported agriculture. Bristol, Soil Association.
- Soil Association (2011b). Organic Buying Groups - Opportunities for 'scaling up' through cooperation: what can the UK learn from European models? Bristol, Soil Association.
- Soil Association (2011c). The Road to 2020: Towards healthy, humane and sustainable food, farming and land use. Bristol, Soil Association.
- Soil Association (2012a). Organic Market Report 2012. Organic Market Report. Bristol, Soil Association.
- Soil Association (2012b). Buying Groups – a viable supermarket alternative? Bristol, Soil Association.
- Soil Association (2012c). Soil Association organic standards: farming and growing. Revision 16.7 August 2012. Bristol, Soil Association.
- Soil Association. (2013a). "Not in my banger- Support our campaign." Retrieved 16th August, 2013, from <http://www.soilassociation.org/notinmybanger/supportourappeal>.
- Soil Association. (2013b). "Producer membership." Retrieved 21st August, 2013, from <http://www.soilassociation.org/farmersgrowers/producermembership>.
- Soil Association. (2013c). "Innovative farming." Retrieved 21st August, 2013, from <http://www.soilassociation.org/innovativefarming>.
- Soil Association. (2013d). "Duchy Originals Future Farming Programme: About the programme." Retrieved 21st August, 2013, from <http://www.soilassociation.org/innovativefarming/duchyoriginalsfuturefarmingprogramme/abouttheprogramme>.
- Soil Association. (2013e). "Low Carbon Farming." Retrieved 21st August, 2013, from <http://www.soilassociation.org/lowcarbon>.

- Soil Association. (2013f). "Community Supported Agriculture: Resources." Retrieved 21st August, 2013, from <http://www.soilassociation.org/communitysupportedagriculture/resources>.
- Soil Association. (2013g). "Organic buying groups." Retrieved 21st August, 2013, from <http://www.soilassociation.org/organicbuyinggroups>.
- Soil Association. (2013h). "Sustainable Food Cities Network." Retrieved 22nd August, 2013, from <http://www.soilassociation.org/sustainablefoodcities>.
- Soil Association. (2013i). "What is the Food for Life Catering Mark?" Retrieved 28th August, 2013, from <http://www.sacert.org/catering/whatisthecateringmark#sectors>.
- Soil Association. (2013k). "Organic Food Awards - Product - Growing Communities." Retrieved 31st October 2013, from <http://www.soilassociation.org/awards/organicfoodawards/product/articleid/5879/growing-communities>.
- Soil Association. (2014). "What is organic?" Retrieved 19th March, 2014, from <https://www.soilassociation.org/whatisorganic>.
- Sonnino, R. and T. Marsden (2006). "Beyond the divide: rethinking relationships between alternative and conventional food networks in Europe." *Journal of Economic Geography* 6(2): 181-199.
- Sonnino, R. and S. McWilliam (2011). "Food waste, catering practices and public procurement: A case study of hospital food systems in Wales." *Food Policy* 36(6): 823-829.
- Spaargaren, G., P. Oosterveer and A. Loeber (2013). *Food practices in transition: changing food consumption, retail and production in the age of reflexive modernity*, Routledge.
- Steinfeld, H., P. Gerber, T. Wassenaar, V. Castel, M. Rosales and C. De Haan (2006). *Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental issues and options*. Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Rome.
- Stern, N. (2006). *The Stern Review of the economics of climate change: Final Report*. London, HM Treasury.
- Stirling, A. (Forthcoming). From Sustainability through diversity to transformation: towards more reflexive governance of technological vulnerability. *Vulnerability in Technological Cultures: New Directions in Research and Governance*. A. Hommels, J. Mesman and W. Bijker. Cambridge MA, MIT Press.
- Stones, M. (2013). DEFRA accused of 'disembowelling' FSA over horse meat. *Food Manufacture*. Crawley, UK, William Reed Business Media Ltd.
- Strang, D. (2011). *The justice of eating: food, fairness and the Fife diet*. *openDemocracy*. Online, openDemocracy Limited.
- Sustain. (2011). "About Sustain." Retrieved Friday 19th July, 2013, from <http://www.sustainweb.org/about/>.
- Sustain. (2013). "Membership." Retrieved 4th July, 2013, from <http://www.sustainweb.org/membership/>.
- Sustainable Food Cities. (2013a). "About Sustainable Food Cities." Retrieved 22nd August, 2013, from <http://www.sustainablefoodcities.org/about>.
- Sustainable Food Cities. (2013b). "Getting started." Retrieved 22nd August, 2013, from <http://www.sustainablefoodcities.org/getinvolved/gettingstarted>.

- Sustainable Lifestyles Research Group. (2012). "Welcome." Retrieved 25th February, 2014, from <http://www.sustainablelifestyles.ac.uk/>.
- Sustainable Procurement Task Force (2006). Procuring the Future: Sustainable Procurement National Action Plan. F. a. R. A. Department for Environment. London, Crown Copyright.
- Tajfel, H. and J. C. Turner (1979). "An integrative theory of intergroup conflict." The social psychology of intergroup relations **33**: 47.
- Teeman, D., D. Featherstone, D. Sims and C. Sharp (2011). Qualitative Impact Evaluation of the Food for Life Partnership Programme. Slough, The National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales.
- The Comptroller and Auditor General (2001). Tackling Obesity in England. The National Audit Office. London, The Stationery Office,.
- The Scottish Government (2009a). Recipe for Success - Scotland's National Food and Drink Policy. Edinburgh, Crown Copyright.
- The Scottish Government. (2009b). "News: Healthy Eating." Retrieved 12th November, 2013, from <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2009/07/07155403>.
- The Scottish Government (2010). Food and Drink in Scotland: Key Facts. Edinburgh, Crown copyright.
- Thompson, J. and I. Scoones (2009). "Addressing the dynamics of agri-food systems: an emerging agenda for social science research." Environmental Science & Policy **12**(4): 386-397.
- Tischner, U., E. Stø, A. Tukker and U. Kjaernes (2010). "Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) of food: overall conclusions on SCP in the food and agriculture domain." System innovation for sustainability: case studies in sustainable consumption and production-food and agriculture **3**: 228-285.
- Transition Forest Row. (2013a). "Groups." Retrieved 23rd October, 2013, from <http://transitionforestrow.org/groups>.
- Transition Forest Row. (2013b). "Members." Retrieved 23rd October, 2013, from <http://transitionforestrow.org/profiles/members/>.
- Treasury, H. (2012). Public Spending Statistics July 2012. London, HM Treasury.
- Turner, R. H. (2014). Social movement. Encyclopaedia Britannica Online.
- Turnheim, B. and F. W. Geels (2012). "Regime destabilisation as the flipside of energy transitions: Lessons from the history of the British coal industry (1913–1997)." Energy Policy **50**: 35-49.
- Unicorn Grocery (2010). Grow a grocery: a guide to starting and growing a wholefood co-operative. Online, Unicorn Grocery Worker Co-operative.
- Unicorn Grocery. (2013a). "Who we are." Retrieved 7th October, 2013, from <http://www.unicorn-grocery.co.uk/who.php>.
- Verheul, H. and P. J. Vergragt (1995). "Social experiments in the development of environmental technology: a bottom-up perspective." Technology Analysis & Strategic Management **7**(3): 315-326.
- Verschuren, P. J. M. (2003). "Case study as a research strategy: some ambiguities and opportunities." International Journal of Social Research Methodology **6**(2): 121.

- Voluntary Sector Studies Network. (2011). "Aims." Retrieved 20th February, 2014, from <http://www.vssn.org.uk/about/aims>.
- Walker, G. and E. Shove (2007). "Ambivalence, Sustainability and the Governance of Socio-Technical Transitions." *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning* 9(3-4): 213-225.
- Walzer, M. (1998). *Toward a global civil society*, Berghahn Books.
- Whatmore, S., P. Stassart and H. Renting (2003). "What's alternative about alternative food networks?" *Environment and Planning A* 35(3): 389-391.
- Wilkinson, I., J. Milligan, A. Booth and A. Roe (2012). *Garden Organic: Report and consolidated financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2011*. Ryton, Henry Doubleday Research Association.
- Witheridge, J. and N. J. Morris (2014). "An analysis of the effect of public policy on community garden organisations in Edinburgh." *Local Environment*: 1-17.
- World Fair Trade Organisation. (2011). "Where did it all begin?" Retrieved 17th June, 2013, from http://www.wfto.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=10&Itemid=11&limit=1&limitstart=1.
- WWF-UK. (No date). "Changing the way we live: Food." Retrieved 18th July, 2013, from [http://www.wwf.org.uk/what we do/changing the way we live/food/](http://www.wwf.org.uk/what_we_do/changing_the_way_we_live/food/).
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods*, Sage.

Appendices

Appendix A

Example interview schedule

1. *Could you tell me a bit more about your history at [organisation name] and your current position (main roles and duties)?*
2. *Can you tell me about work that you do at [organisation name] that is related to food?*
3. *What are you ultimately trying to achieve through the [organisation name]'s food work (in your own opinion)?*
4. *What have been your biggest barriers to progress – cf. your ultimate aims?*
5. *What have been the best opportunities for leverage/impact?*
 - *PROMPT: Unfolding events/trends?*
6. *What are your most important relationships with other organisations and individuals?*
7. *Which organisations and individuals contribute most towards overcoming structural barriers to achieving your aims?*
8. *What are your relationships like with:*
 - *Other campaigning organisations?*
 - *Public sector bodies?*
 - *Food industry?*
9. *Think of a 'Sustainable food system' – what would it be like? How different to current?*
 - *PROMPT: What qualities do you associate with sustainable food?*
10. *How might change come about (from our current food system to a sustainable system)?*

Appendix B

List of interviews and interviewees

Organisation name	Org' ID	Interviewee ID	Interview date
Pilot			
Common Cause Co-operative	n/a	n/a	25/01/12
Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming	Sustain	Sustain-1	10/01/12
New Economics Foundation	n/a	n/a	10/01/12
Case I			
Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch	T&PH	T&PH-1	16/11/11 & 04/02/12
Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch	T&PH	T&PH-2	21/03/12
Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch	T&PH	T&PH-3	22/05/12
Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch	T&PH	T&PH-4	22/05/12
Biodynamic Agricultural College	BDAC	BDAC-1	22/05/12
Biodynamic Land Trust	BDLT	BDLT-1	12/04/12
Biodynamic Agricultural Association	BDA	BDA-1	12/04/12
Transition Forest Row	TFR	TFR-1	20/03/12
Case II			
Fife Diet	FD	FD-1	19/04/12
Fife Diet	FD	FD-2	20/07/12
Fife Diet	FD	FD-3	29/03/12
Fife Diet	FD	FD-4	18/04/12
Greener Kirkcaldy	GK	GK-1	16/08/12
Moffat-CAN	M-CAN	M-CAN-1	16/08/12
Nourish Scotland	NS	NS-1	08/02/12
Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming	Sustain	Sustain-1	15/08/12
WWF-UK	WWF-UK	WWF-UK-1	12/07/12
Case III			
Soil Association	SA	SA-1	26/01/12
Soil Association	SA	SA-2	16/03/12
Soil Association	SA	SA-3	16/03/12

Soil Association	SA	SA-4	31/05/12
Soil Association	SA	SA-5	27/06/12
Soil Association	SA	SA-6	20/06/12
Soil Association	SA	SA-7	04/07/12
Soil Association	SA	SA-8	19/06/12
Unicorn Grocery	Unicorn	U-1	15/06/12
Growing Communities	Grow Com	Grow Com-1	23/08/12
Garden Organic	GO	GO-1	02/08/12
Food Ethics Council	FEC	FEC-1	27/02/12
Compassion in World Farming	CIWF	CIWF-1	12/07/12
Marine Stewardship Council	MSC	MSC-1	19/07/12
Marine Stewardship Council	MSC	MSC-2	25/07/12

Appendix C

Lists of interviewees' job titles (separated from the above table and randomised to safeguard anonymity of interviewees)

Pilot: Co-founder, Co-ordinator, Fellow and Ex-Policy Director

Case I: Business Manager, Co-ordinator, Course Leader, Executive Director, Founding Director, Head Gardener, Trustee, Voluntary Director

Case II: Chairperson and Project Manager, Co-ordinator, Development Manager, Executive Director, Food Policy Manager, Growing Co-ordinator, Membership & Outreach Co-ordinator, Project Co-ordinator, Project Director

Case III: Business Development Director, Chief Executive, Commercial Manager, Commercial Officer, Deputy Director/General Secretary, Director, Director of Campaigns and Communications, Director of Public Affairs, Executive Director, Policy Director, Project Co-ordinator, Project Co-ordinator, Scotland Director, Worker-member, Associate Director